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Home and identity in Cambodia : implications of the revolution and internal turmoil of the 1970s on children's right to education

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HOME AND IDENTITY IN CAMBODIA: IMPLICATIONS OF THE REVOLUTION AND INTERNAL TURMOIL OF THE 1970s ON CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO
Dissertation Abstract

HOME AND IDENTITY IN CAMBODIA: IMPLICATIONS OF THE REVOLUTION AND INTERNAL TURMOIL OF THE 1970s ON CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The killing fields constitute one of the worst genocides in history. These events are too painful for most people to discuss, either among themselves or with their children. The current generation of Cambodians who are under the age of 30 are ignorant about the past and the atrocities that occurred during the revolution of the 1970s. This tragic past raises concerns about the ramifications that these events have for children's rights and in particular, children's entitlement to a quality of education that prepares them for a brighter future. Through a critical hermeneutic approach, this study considers the Cambodian idea of home and identity, the effects of the revolution and the turmoil of the 1970s on children's right to education, and the inappropriately low amount of resources subsequently allotted for children's education. Critical hermeneutics permits interpretation and understanding through discourse, text creation, text analysis, and the appropriation of new worlds through interpretation of the text. Herda (1999:127) writes that "text enables us to communicate with each other as researchers in a profession, as researchers in concert with participants, and as readers of the text over time." Through Paul Ricoeur's (1992) theory of narrative identity, Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1975) theory of fusion of horizons, and Richard Kearney's (1988) theory of imagination, I came to new understandings of the identity of the Cambodian survivors of the killing fields and the struggles that they continue to face to survive and to educate their children. This research yielded several findings that could be considered in an effort to redesign the

Cambodian education system on both national and local levels: 1. lack of parental education; 2. lack of family involvement in education; 3. traditions are not maintained and there is not a venue for storytelling to keep the past in perspective; 4. national strengths and historical contributions are not part of current curriculum; 5. there is no early childhood education program. These findings are critical in light of the rich traditions and cultural contributions of Cambodia and the eagerness of Cambodian children and adults to learn.

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Nadine Agosta, Author

Dr. Ellen A. Herda
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This dissertation is dedicated to my sister, Andrea Sasso,
in gratitude for her unconditional love and support throughout my life.

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

> Repeatedly, the Khmer Rouge told us that we were insignificant, that to destroy us was no loss. Revenge in the Western sense can be a destructive force in the life of a wronged person, but for Cambodians revenge has a different meaning. By our actions, by what we accomplish, we intend to show that we do have significance. When we have proven the Khmer Rouge wrong in their assessment of our culture and of us as individuals, our revenge will be complete (Criddle 1987:286).

Many atrocities occurred in Cambodia during the 1970s under the Khmer Rouge regime. An estimated 1.7 million people—almost a quarter of the population—were executed from 1975 to 1979 (Roasa 2007:8) and buried in mass graves. The Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, executed monks, educators, and doctors, as well as anyone who even appeared to have more than a basic education. Cambodians who were not executed were sent to rice camps, known as the "killing fields," and starved, overworked, and tortured. The mass killings represented Pol Pot's attempt to reinvent Cambodian civilization by destroying everything and brainwashing the people to trust no one and forget their past. Children became soldiers, choosing who should live and who should die.

Thirty years after this tragic episode, questions arise about how Cambodians understand home and identity. In addition, this tragic past raises concerns about the ramifications that these events have for children's rights and in particular, children's entitlement to a quality of education that prepares them for a brighter future.

Through a critical hermeneutic approach, I attempt through this text to understand the Cambodian idea of home and identity, the effects of the recent revolution and the turmoil of the 1970s on children's rights, and the subsequent appropriation of resources

for children's education. This text is the result of relationships I developed with research partners during my trips to Cambodia and conversations that I held with them about developing a course of action to address problems identified. This introductory Chapter explains this text further by presenting a statement of the research issue, the background of the problem, the significance of the research subject, and a summary of the relevant points in the introduction.

Statement of the Research Issue

The current generation of Cambodian children (those under the age of 30) is ignorant about what happened to their parents under the Khmer Rouge. Young people do not really know about the past and the atrocities that occurred during the revolution of the 1970s. In order to move past what has happened to them, the Cambodians need to share their experiences of the past with the younger generation because without a past one cannot plan for a future. Kearney (1988:392) writes, "….humanity has a duty, if it wishes to survive its threatened ending, to remember the past and to project a future." According to my research partners, these events are too painful for most people to discuss, either among themselves or with their children. But if one cannot recall or talk about the past, it is impossible to imagine a different future—a future in which resources are appropriated and allocated and policies are developed and implemented providing Cambodian children with an education in which they learn about home and identity as well as the atrocities of the past that prepares them to better understand who they are and what they want to become.

The killing fields constitute one of the worst genocides in history. In order to better understand this event and its implications for Cambodians, this document explores

the history of the Cambodian people that led up to the revolution and turmoil of the 1970s. In addition, this study researches aspects of selected schools that represent the current educational system in Cambodia, a system that attempts to provide children in Cambodia with skills to earn a living and rise above the abject poverty they currently endure. Due to the prevalence of non-government organizations (NGOs) who are contributing funds to higher education, older children have a better chance of receiving an appropriate education. However, despite the availability of funds for higher education, many children drop out of primary school because they are needed at home to help earn an income to support their family.

A nation's ability to thrive and be economically viable depends on the education of its children. Educational policies determine features of many programs such as who is qualified to attend, minimum qualifications for teachers, additional services available to children and families, types of teacher professional development, and monitoring program and classroom quality (Mashburn, et al 2008:732). I immersed myself in the Cambodian culture by traveling to Cambodia three times between Summer 2007 and Summer 2008, volunteering in a private school to attempt to better understand educational policy and studying the needs and wants of families with whom I came in contact. Through my conversations, I came to new understandings of the identity of the Cambodian survivors of the killing fields, as well as the struggles they face today to survive and educate their children.

Background of the Research Issue

Although Cambodia is often reputed to be a changeless society (Chandler 2008:5), it has actually undergone five major revolutions over the centuries from the 15th

to present day. These changes in political power have significantly altered the Cambodian culture and reinforced their self-conception as a submissive people. In addition, nearly four decades of war, civil conflict, and political instability and misrule have had significant implications for the country.

The revolution of the 1970s left Cambodia in a state of devastation from which it will take decades to recover. Forty percent of the population lives in abject poverty (UNICEF/UNGEI 2007); families are forced use extreme measures to survive. These measures include selling off their children to prostitution, child labor, child migration, malnutrition, mental and physical abuse, and foregoing education (UNICEF/UNGEI 2007).

Children's rights, including access to a quality education, have become a priority for many countries around the world as described in Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Kent 1998:1). Many nations realize that successful development depends upon the health and education of their children. Without an education, inhabitants are forced to survive through industries that foster high levels of poverty. The alleviation of poverty will result from economic growth. If children have access to an education that offers training in entrepreneurship they would be better prepared to find and develop their own opportunities which would enable them to become productive citizens who contribute to the economy.

Advocacy for children is needed in Cambodia in areas such as health, safety, and education. Because the problem of children's rights violations is so widespread, many NGOs are making an effort to help eliminate poverty and make the future brighter for children. While there are over 300 NGOs listed on the internet as working in Cambodia,

one of my research partners, who works for an NGO, informed me that there are in fact over 1,000 NGOs operating in Cambodia. This is a significant number, representing the magnitude of the global concern for Cambodia's future. If Cambodia can enforce practices that protect children and provide an education system that empowers them to be productive citizens, it can improve its economic stability as well as the future of its children.

Figure 1. Children acting as tourist guides in Battambang

In order to change the future for children, Cambodians need to re-remember their past and then attempt to forgive what has happened. Ricoeur (2004:483) wrote extensively about the importance of both of these steps to victims of violence. Ricoeur (2004:483) describes how this can benefit victims when he says, "Families who fought for years to know the facts were able to express their pain, vent their hatred in the presence of offenders and before witnesses…..they had an opportunity to tell of tortures and the name the criminals." This expression allows victims of injustices to use the work of memory and the process of mourning to recount the suffering they endured. By

speaking out in this manner, they can effectively place blame for what happened, begin the process of healing, then re-remember, which is critical if forgiveness is to begin. The process of re-remembering the past includes reappropriating memories so as to create a basis from which a new and better future can be built. However, forgiveness cannot begin until people have some idea of what happened. In Cambodia, a variety of cultural and economic factors have contributed to the fact that many youth do not know their history. I believe that it is important for the Cambodian people to make intentional efforts to re-remember their past in order to bring about change so that healing and forgiveness can take place among people at all levels of society.

While this process is essential to overcome the horrors of the past, Ricoeur's theory of forgiveness is based on his belief in Christianity, which includes the concept that we must love one another and forgive wrongs committed against us. Many eastern societies believe in karma, a sense that the quality of a person's current and future life is determined by a person's behavior in this life and previous lives. The difference between Ricoeur's theory and the eastern way of thought is the belief that individuals have the ability to change their destiny. Theology is not key; rather, it is important for Cambodians to adopt an orientation toward a new understanding of what is possible in the future, doing so within a cultural and religious context that is appropriate for them. This paper considers the benefits of a narrative approach to understanding identity so that the people of Cambodia may bring about necessary change to improve their lives and the lives of future generations.

Summary

Cambodia is a country of survivors. Most people have a story to tell, but have chosen not to tell it. Tangible memories, such as weapons, human remains, and physical disabilities, remind Cambodians daily of their past. But Cambodians must tell and retell their intangible memories, including their history and personal experiences, in order to understand what has happened to them so that they can begin to forgive and heal. Forgiveness and healing will, in turn, allow Cambodians to imagine a brighter future for their children thereby instigating a drive to create policies that reflect their understanding of their identity and the future that they appropriate for themselves.

Through the use of imagination, the Cambodian culture can be reinvented and re-imagined in a way that may protect them from future atrocities. Imagination is the first step in bringing about change; if a people can imagine a future without poverty or fear of government and in which human rights are protected, they can reinvent themselves and create a new identity. Kearney (1988:393) writes, "the historical imagination seeks to transfigure the postmodern present by refiguring lost narratives and prefiguring future ones." Cambodians need to remember the atrocities of the past and retell their stories if they are going to project or imagine a better future. While imagination alone cannot bring about the changes that are needed, imagination coupled with creating narratives of the past and then projecting an appropriated future by creating policy that provides education accessible to all children can bring about change.

Through the use of imagination, Cambodians can create an equitable education system that provides services for all children, provides support for families so that they can ensure that their children are educated, and produce teachers who are adequately

educated and compensated so that they can promote authentic learning in children instead of the style of rote memorization that occurs today. Part of the issue in Cambodia is related to the lack of a unified vision about the importance of and the kind of education that is needed for its children.

Through this critical hermeneutic study, I build upon prior research on Cambodian history, interpret new meanings from conversations with research partners, and envision an action plan for the future. Chapter Two explains the background of Cambodia, including its geography, demographics, and religious teachings, as well as the political and social contexts that led to the revolution of the 1970s.

CHAPTER II

THE COUNTRY OF CAMBODIA

> I drank a huge glass of alcohol mixed with human liver. Then I shot all day long. I killed 300 people…there were civilians and soldiers, officials and peasants, men and women, elderly people and children.
>
> K. Christensen, UNICEF telegram, 22 March 1980 (Metzl 1996:107)

Introduction

This Chapter aims to help the reader understand Cambodia's history, as well as the issues that have plagued Cambodians for centuries and which have implications for children today. Researchers (Chandler 1999; Etcheson 2005; Ayres 2000) indicate that Cambodians have been conditioned to believe that they are helpless, useless people, which has made them vulnerable to tyrannical leaders. Although the French and Pol Pot claimed that Cambodia had a history of "changelessness" stretching over 2,000 years, in reality, according to Chandler (2008:1-14), the revolution of the 1970s was Cambodia's fifth. In addition to exploring the major revolutions that led up to the Khmer Rouge's takeover in 1975, this Chapter examines the geographic features, demographic data, religious teachings, and political and economic events that have shaped Cambodians' lives and left them vulnerable to revolutions, turmoil, and dangerous leadership.

Geography

Cambodia covers an area of Southeast Asia slightly smaller than the size of Oklahoma (181,040 sq km). It is bordered to the north by Laos and Thailand, to the east and south by Vietnam, and to the south and west by the Gulf of Thailand. The Dangrek Mountains are located in the northwest section of the nation, while the Cardamom Mountains and the Elephant Range are in the southwest. The land comprises paddies and forests dominated by the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake and river (see Figure 1).

Cambodia is located only 13 degrees north of the equator, making it a tropical climate. It receives monsoonal rains from June to November, which results in flooding; and a relatively dry season from December to May, which results in the occasional drought.

Given Cambodia's geographic location, it is not surprising that they have a long-standing history of border disputes. Gottesman (2003:13) describes the Cambodian history involving border disputes with her more aggressive neighbors, Vietnam (to the east) and Thailand (to the west). Present international boundary disputes involve disputed offshore islands, sections of the borders shared with Vietnam and Thailand, and maritime boundaries with Thailand (Mann 2005:11).

Figure 2. Map of Cambodia (reprinted from www.about.com)

Demographics

Cambodia has a population of 13.4 million people (2008 Census) with an average annual growth rate in 2008 of 1.54% (U.S. Dept. of State Bureau of Asian Affairs). The life expectancy is 59 years old for males and 63 years old for females. The ethnicity

breakdown for Cambodia is Cambodian 90%; Vietnamese five percent; Chinese one percent; and others four percent. Ninety-five percent of the population practice Theravada Buddhism as their religion; the balance includes Islam, animism, and Christianity. Khmer is the official language, spoken by more than 95% of the population, while some French is still spoken in urban areas. English is becoming increasingly popular as a second language. Compulsory education is nine years and enrollment in primary school is at 92%. The completion rates in for primary school are 48%; for lower secondary school, 21%; for upper secondary school, nine percent; and for university, six percent (U.S. Dept. of State, 2008).

Cambodia is well-known for its magnificent ancient temples. Located at Angkor Wat near the present-day town of Siem Reap, they were built over a period of 300 years, between 900 and 1200 CE. The Angkor area, which stretches over 15 miles, is home to 72 major temples or other ancient buildings. Construction of Angkor Thom coincided with a change in the national religion from Hinduism to Buddhism. Temples were altered to display images of the Buddha, and Angkor Wat became a major Buddhist shrine.

Figure 3. Temple at Angkor Wat (reprinted from U.S. Dept. of State Bureau of Asian Affairs, 2008)

During the 15th century, the area was abandoned after Siamese attacks. The exception was Angkor Wat, which remained a shrine for Buddhist pilgrims. The temples were rediscovered in the forest in the late 19th century, at which point French archaeologists began a long restoration process. Concerned about the further destruction and dilapidation of the Angkor complex and the loss of its cultural heritage, the Cambodian Government in 1995 established the Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA) to protect, maintain, conserve, and improve the value of the archaeological park. In December 1995 the World Heritage Committee confirmed Angkor's permanent inscription on the World Heritage List (U.S. Dept. of State 2008).

The Cambodian gross domestic product (GDP) for 2007 was $8.6 billion; agriculture, industry and services are its leading industries. Agriculture constituted 29% of the 2007 GDP; about 12 million acres of the country are unforested land. Products include rice, rubber, corn, meat, vegetables, dairy products, sugar, and flour. Industry made up 27% of the 2007 GDP. Types included garment and shoe manufacturing, rice milling, tobacco, fisheries and fishing, wood and wood products, textiles, cement, some rubber production, paper, and food processing. Services account for 39% of Cambodia's 2007 GDP, and include tourism, telecommunications, transportation, and construction.

Religious Teachings

Religion grounds the events making up Cambodia's history. Ayres (2000:11) writes that from the country's earliest history, the Buddhist religion legitimized the king and the hierarchy that came from the monarchy. He says, "this theology stemmed from two key tenets of the Buddhist doctrine: first, that human beings are imperfect and need

guidance and protection; and second, that individuals alone are essentially helpless (2000:11). The Buddhist concept of political authority asserted that a king was needed in order to maintain social order.

The hierarchical social system legitimized the perceived need to deal with human imperfection and helplessness, which drew its foundations from Hindu-Buddhist ideals and truths (Ayres 2000:13). Ayres (2000:13) writes, "it is from these notions that the king was able to assert his legitimacy and villagers were able locate their positions and the appropriate behaviors they required." Prior to the arrival of the French, literacy was very low among the peasants and for many the only education they received came through the country's proverbs and religious teachings (2000:13). Ayres says it has been argued that "monks assumed a pre-eminent social position commensurate with their monopolization of knowledge associate with written texts" (2000:14). As a result, the lack of literacy and the education taught by the Buddhist monks, set the stage for the Cambodian people's subjection to the tragedies that occurred in the 1970s under the Khmer Rouge.

Political Unrest Prior to Revolution

Although many political events had implications for the revolution of the 1970s, for the purposes of this paper, the research begins in the 1950's, a period that served as a critical catalyst for the events of the ensuing decades. During the 1950's, the Communist party in Cambodia used persuasion and education to develop a military network aimed at starting a revolution and overthrowing Prince Sihanouk. The Communists' agenda was to unite temporarily with as many allies as possible; then, once the Communists had seized power, they planned to abandon their allies.

Sihanouk's police frequently harassed the Communists at their meetings in the rural areas where the Communists had received the most support. Notwithstanding the challenges they faced from the authorities, many joined the Communist cause, including students, schoolteachers, Buddhist monks, and urban workers, who joined the movement between 1950 and 1960 because they were inspired by teachers like Cambodian Saloth Sar. They opposed Sihanouk's dictatorial style and the injustices he perpetrated on Cambodian society. What was needed, they believed, was liberation from foreign domination and the United States, which represented the "Number One Enemy" of the revolution (Chandler 1999:55-56).

In 1959 Sihanouk was distracted from attacking the Communist party due to plots against him formulated by Thailand and South Vietnam, with the knowledge of the United States. The threats to his life and power led him to form a united front with the Communist party, led by Saloth Sar. Throughout the 1960's, minor crises and pressure from North Vietnam to join forces to overcome South Vietnam put Saloth Sar in a position of tremendous power over Sihanouk. Sar ran secret seminars, recruiting people to the Communist cause by portraying what he termed "the Khmer life," which he framed as the opposite of what Sihanouk's government was creating by living off the people.

Demonstrations sprang up everywhere, and Sihanouk was delivered a list of thirty-four men who were considered subversive. Sar, whose name was on the top of the list, escaped from Phnom Penh and went into hiding in the countryside by the Vietnam border. At this point he gave us his double life and became a full-time revolutionary. He assumed a new identity while in hiding, calling himself "Brother Number One." From 1963 to 1970, he strategized about how to seize control as the leader of the Red Khmer

(Khmer Rouge). Sihanouk was overthrown in 1970, but it took five years of civil war before Sar and the Khmer Rouge gained control. During this time, the Vietnam War escalated sharply (Chandler 1999:61-67).

After seven years in the wilderness, Saloth Sar came out of hiding. As the United States bombed Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge gathered support, using anti-American rhetoric as its unification theme. Saloth Sar stressed that the party should be made up of the "poor peasant, lower-middle-class peasant, and worker backgrounds—from deep down in rural areas, extracted from the earth like diamonds" (Chandler 1999:94). Until 1972, most of the Khmer Rouge's support had come from Vietnam. In 1973, when most of the troops from the United States had been withdrawn from Cambodia, Vietnam planned an assault on Saigon, but instead, agreed to conditions from the United States not to invade under threat of renewed bombardment.

Over the next two years, Saloth Sar orchestrated two major assaults to push the United States out of Phnom Penh. In 1974, Sar become gravely ill and disappeared from sight. While he was absent from the scene, the Khmer Rouge conducted its final assault and achieved their goal. From that moment on, no foreign aid was allowed into the country. On April 17, 1975, hundreds of thousands of Cambodian men, women, and children were driven out of their homes with no belongings and forced to march for weeks on foot into the jungle (Chandler 1999:95-110).

According to Duffy (1994:85), when the Khmer Rouge seized power in April 1975, they did so with the intention of destroying Cambodia's hierarchical political culture and reconstructing the society from the ground up. This goal required the elimination of both religious and ethnic minority groups. The violence and slaughter

perpetrated on Buddhist religious orders represented one of the most comprehensive attacks on religion in modern history. Before 1975, approximately 60,000 Buddhist monks resided in Cambodia; fewer than 1,000 survived the killings. Minority groups were also subject to systematic attacks, as thousands of ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese, Lao, Thai, Cham, and Pakistani residents were systematically executed (Duffy 1994:86).

Revolution of the 1970s

The Khmer Rouge began their long war with a style of revolutionary violence that moved from village to village, removing local leaders and putting revolutionary leaders in their place. The killing of the village chiefs became the Khmer Rouge's pattern for the next thirty years (Etcheson 2005:4-5). Leaders who escaped execution retreated into the remote jungles of northeastern Cambodia. Another innovation the Khmer Rouge put in place during their early jungle years was the recruitment of children as soldiers. Children as young as six years old would be recruited to "Angkar," meaning "the organization." Etcheson (2005:5) quotes a man in Ratanakiri Province who described his recruitment at the age of eleven. He said, "I went with Angkar because at that time in my village there was no salt, no food to eat. Angkar had food, and taught us how to serve our country. I was too young to understand the political agenda." The Khmer Rouge saw children as the core of the revolution because they were easily trained to carry out any task. Etcheson (2005:6) writes that the children were trained to believe that the society which they fought against was "despicable, contemptible, corrupt, unjust and oppressive."

In 1970 (Etcheson 2005:6), the Khmer Rouge led a coup to overthrow Sihanouk, which had catastrophic consequences for Cambodia. Up to this point, Sihanouk had supported the Khmer Rouge in order to remain on the same side as the powerful party.

When the Khmer Rouge seized power in 1975, they began to engage in massive killings, executing all military officers of the non-Khmer Rouge Communist party. After killing off the civil servants, all residents of the cities were marched into the countryside. Anyone who appeared to have a connection with the enemy—such as those with an education, or even those who wore eyeglasses (see Appendix E), suggesting that they had an education, was vulnerable to execution.

This violence was not limited to Cambodians. The Khmer Rouge believed they were at war with all three of their neighbors—Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos. Over time, the attacks against the Vietnamese become intolerable, leading the Vietnamese to assemble a small army of refugees, many of whom were former Khmer Rouge themselves. Vietnam attacked the Khmer Rouge in 1978, and within two weeks, Cambodia was liberated. This liberation, however, set the stage for another twenty years of war in Cambodia (Etcheson 2005:7).

The Khmer Rouge retreated to the Thailand border and established military camps, where tens of thousands of civilians were subjected to violations of their human rights for over a decade. These abuses included the denial of food and medical care; the use of children in warfare; forced labor; exposing civilians to physical danger by making them targets of military attack; and forcing refugees back into the country from which they had fled. Despite the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1978 (Etcheson 2005:8), the group continued its reign of terror over the Cambodian people. The Vietnamese withdrew from Cambodia in 1989 (Etcheson 2005:8) and left their regime, the People's Republic of Kampuchea, to fend for themselves against the Khmer Rouge. The two sides eventually reached a stalemate in 1991 (Etcheson 2005:8) under the

support of a United Nations (UN) organized election, on which the Khmer Rouge eventually reneged. The group continued its regime of war and terror (Etcheson 2005:8), which eventually led to the Khmer Rouge attacking the UN itself, resulting in the murder of numerous international peacekeepers. Meanwhile, the Khmer Rouge continued to execute civilians in Cambodia. The result was thirty years of the most destructive and terror-filled revolution in modern history (Etcheson 2005:10). As a result of these tragic events, almost two million people were executed or died of starvation and overwork as the Communist regime emptied Cambodia's cities, exiling millions to vast collective farms in an attempt to create an agrarian utopia. In order to create such a society, the Khmer Rouge abolished money, religion, and schools.

Pol Pot's vision of creating an agrarian utopia represented his attempt to destroy the Cambodian concept of home and identity. He wanted Cambodians to erase the happy memories and the rich cultural traditions they had previously enjoyed and become a people who had no traditions or desires, except to follow their leader's commands. People were tortured to brainwash them to forget their concept of a home made up of blood relatives that loved and trusted each other. From conversations with my Cambodian research partners, I have learned that the revolution years are a part of their history about which Cambodians remain silent, due to fear, pain, and disbelief. Sambo Ly, one of my research partners who is a Cambodian refugee and Program Manager for a Refugee Health Program in Oakland, describes her feelings, saying

> but then the only thing that's really bothering me that we all went through that period of other life, that you have nothing. But then, you are going to turn around and practice the same thing, over and over, you know. We all, at that time, 1975, we all have nothing, you know? All we have, all we have is ourselves. And I don't have my parents, I don't have my brother and sister, I just have myself. But now that you looking back, the way that Cambodian is going right now, the rich

> getting richer, the poor getting poorer, people didn't take that experience and learn from it. You know, or trying to do something.

This destruction of families, communities, and their economy resulted in abject poverty for the majority of Cambodians, and, as mentioned in the introduction, has forced families to subject their children to horrible abuses in order to survive (UNICEF/UNGEI 2007). In addition, Cambodia still suffers from corruption that thwarts any attempt to right the injustices of the past. The Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org/en/news/) reported on the situation in a newspaper article on January 5, 2009, saying that

> thirty years after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia's culture of impunity remains as strong as ever. Under Prime Minister Hun Sen, the Cambodian government continues to obstruct the United Nations-supported court created to try senior Khmer Rouge leaders and others most responsible for the deaths of up to 2 million people during the Khmer Rouge era.

Thus, the struggle of Cambodians to move past the tragedies of the 1970s is challenged by such ongoing problems, for remembering the past, forgiving, and reappropriating a better future is difficult when the government continues to cover up for the atrocities that took place.

One example of the attempts to cover up the mass killings of the 1970s comes from senior Khmer Rouge officials, who have attempted to explain the existence of the mass graves by asserting that they were created by Vietnamese spies who had infiltrated the revolution. Shelton et al (2005) reports, however, that the uniform distribution of the mass graves throughout populated areas of the country makes this explanation very unlikely.

Economic Deterioration

In addition to the political uncertainties that led to the revolution, the deterioration of economic expenditures helped to weaken Cambodia and left the nation vulnerable to

tyrannical leadership. Long Boret, who was the finance minister in 1962, stated in a press conference that Cambodia had experienced a 30% increase in working expenditures, one of the principle causes being the "heavy maintenance burden of schools" (Ayres 2000:46). Prince Sihanouk had laid out a five-year plan that would have provided a cutback in spending. However, while Boret expressed support for Sihanouk's spending slowdown, government records indicate that expenditures for national education increased in real terms, rising from proportionately 14.8% of the national budget in 1962 to 20% in 1963 (Ayres 2000:46).

The official reaction to the economic problems was to align more closely with China by adopting an "agriculture first" policy in terms of education. The alignment represented an opportunity to address problems with the school system. The opportunity was never realized, however, and the prevailing crisis never addressed.

In 1963, amidst an economic crisis, Prince Sihanouk decided to turn away all assistance from the United States, saying that that country had failed to honor Cambodia's political position of neutrality. "Erasing" the United States from Cambodia, Sihanouk cut off all military and economic assistance, which caused a substantial decrease in its annual revenues; Cambodia had accepted $278 million in U.S. economic assistance between 1954 and 1963. An economic aid program had accounted for $88 million of that aid, with 14% of it devoted to educational development (Ayres 2000:47). Then, in a symbolic move, Prince Sihanouk sent three of his sons to China to further their education (Ayres 2000:48).

Children's Rights and Cambodian Education

For centuries, Cambodians have been educated and conditioned to think that they are a dependent, passive people. Invasions, revolutions, and war have left the country in poverty, forcing Cambodians to do anything they can to survive. This desperation has had major implications for children's rights. The country's children have suffered neglect, starvation, a lack of medical care, and inadequate education.

The poorly educated workforce has resulted in a poverty rate of 36% nationally in 2006 (Phyrum 2007:58). In many rural areas, the poverty rate is much worse. Most rural inhabitants are sustenance farmers and can barely support their families. The prices of commodities such as rice and wheat have reached astronomical levels, and people cannot afford to grow or buy rice, which is the staple of their diet. Illiteracy rates, which range from 20% in the cities to 50% in the countryside (Phyrum 2007:58), are serious challenges to alleviating poverty

There is enormous need for change in the field of education. Problems include a lack of classrooms, equipment and other infrastructure; low salaries that force teachers to work second jobs; a shortage of qualified and experienced teachers in rural areas; lack of assistance to poor students; and the persistence of informal school fees that hinder attendance by the disadvantaged. A large pool of over aged students also complicates the attempt to educate all (Hammer 2008).

Summary

The combination of Cambodia's religious, political, and social history and problems made the country an easy target for the Khmer Rouge. Centuries of dependent,

non-aggressive behavior had labeled the Cambodians, both in their own eyes and the eyes of others, as a weak people.

Ricoeur ties recognition to identity in his theory of recognition. He writes, "the recognition of one's own identity would include the individual and collective capabilities that precondition the understanding of one's self-identity" (Ricoeur 1984: 297). Unfortunately, Cambodians could not foresee the implications of their self-recognition as a dependent, passive society. The implications of Cambodians' self-recognition as a dependent, passive society and the resulting frustration may be inappropriately released in directions unrelated to the source of the problem. As Newman and Erber (2002:117) explain,

> Among social psychologists, the external events version of scapegoating is most accepted. It begins with a frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard et al. 1939). Frustrating events create an instigation to aggress against the source of the frustration, an instigation that may or may not be acted upon directly and that may be displaced. Consistent with Freudian theory, Dollard et al. presume if the instigation is not acted upon, the desire to aggress does not disappear and is likely to "leak out" in some form to release the individual's aggressive energy.

It is time for Cambodians to understand the actions of the past, find new meanings, and make plans and changes to bring about the future they desire. If Cambodia is to be economically viable, this future must include plans for educating its children. Ensalaco & Majka (2004:247) note that "as today's children are the citizens of tomorrow's world, their survival, protection, and development are the prerequisite for the future development of humanity." The national and local Cambodian government must support the many NGO's in their efforts to protect the rights of their children and put an end to the abuses that have plagued their country for centuries.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

> If a person goes to fight a war, he becomes another person, because he learns how to kill other people, even his own mother and father. . . . During that time he only thinks of killing. . . . When he returns he has to be treated to become his own self again (Honwana 2006:105).

This Chapter examines the research on the historical implications of war and the destruction of identity for Cambodia; the implications of development for Cambodia; the education system in Cambodia; and the theoretical concepts of narrative identity, fusion of horizons, and imagination. Based on the critical hermeneutic approach, a review of this literature helps to interpret the Cambodians' concept of home and identity. This literature review will help the reader to understand the obstacles, past and present, faced by Cambodians in order to attain successful development, which is based on appropriating and applying the resources needed to offer education to all children.

Effects of War on a Nation

United Nations officials work in developing and poverty-stricken nations. Their continued optimism that a brighter future lies ahead keeps them going. Andrew Morris, head of the Cambodian Health Services of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), offered an outlook that is hopeful when looking a distance into the future. He said, "I don't think is a good outlook for this generation; the hope is for the Cambodians not yet born" (Kamm 1998:1). Unfortunately, Cambodians remain plagued with a feeling of hopelessness regarding the economic conditions they currently endure.

Since 1970, when Cambodia entered the Indochina War, which began with the Vietnamese fighting against French colonial rule and lasted until the Communist victories

in Vietnam and Laos in 1975, Cambodia has suffered the worst century of its history. It has struggled through five years of bloody civil war; four years of a genocidal revolution; a so-called liberation through the invasion and a decade of occupation by Vietnam, a hated and feared neighbor; and unending warfare on its soil that continues to this day (Kamm 1998:3-4). Much of this warfare has involved the use of children.

When children are recruited or forced into wartime activities, research shows that a transformation occurs. Killing and survival become their main focus, and they lose their emotional and empathetic capacities. Participation in wartime activities results in many physical and mental disabilities. Roughly three percent of the population in Cambodia today has some type of disability as a result of the revolution of the 1970s (Zook 2008:8). With a total population of around 14 million people, that percentage equals approximately 420,000 people (Zook 2008:8).

These statistics are taken from a 2008 Cambodian census on disabled communities in Cambodia; statistics in Cambodia, however, are notoriously unreliable (Zook 2008:8). For example, the quantity of persons with "intellectual disabilities" in Cambodia is said to be ten percent. Although Zook uses the official count from the 2008 census of persons with intellectual disabilities, he believes the number is much higher, but that due to inadequate record keeping and a failure to diagnose people in rural areas, the number does not reflect the actual percentage of Cambodians affected by disabilities. With so many of its former child soldiers potentially thus suffering, Cambodia needs to address the diagnosis and treatment of the various ailments of its population. Having plans to help them in place, may offer opportunities for individuals beyond a negative labeling system.

Post-war reintegration of child soldiers poses a significant problem in Cambodia. When a war ends, child soldiers return to what used to be their home. Many may have physical and mental disabilities that keep them from fitting into their former context. Honwana (2006:106) writes, "the traditional treatment for a returned soldier who is 'not himself' because he has violated fundamental social norms encompasses the physical, familial, and spiritual domains: purifying his body, quieting his demons, and reincorporating him into the community. After fighting the war, the spirits of the dead can afflict you." Honwana explains that many countries today, including Cambodia, do not support talking about what happened.

Many developing nations have beliefs that would represent what the West would consider superstitions, such as believing that spirits control their lives. In countries such as Cambodia, many people believe in the potent presence of the ghosts of their ancestors. When new graves were discovered in 2007, one Cambodian woman quoted in the *International Herald* said, "now the regime's victims haunt the desecrated fields. I used to be brave, but now I'm afraid to go looking for my buffaloes at night . . . The ghosts have come here. They've lost their way and can't get out" (Mydans 2007). Getting rid of the evil spirits summoned by war becomes a more intuitive response than does remembering past atrocities and reappropriating those memories in a way that leads to a better future. The traditional Cambodian treatment process for addressing the potency of the ghosts' presence involves séances and remedies applied through ingestion, inhalation, and bathing (Honwana 2006:110). Such treatments are believed to cleanse or expel the bad spirits from the afflicted individual and his family and his community. In these countries, not everyone goes through a "cleansing" process to exorcize the demons, but

these practices are common in rural areas, where most Cambodians were sent from the cities from 1975-1979.

In the West, it is likely that feeling the presence of such spirits would be addressed as a mental illness and treated as such. However, it is important to note that the healing practices used in the West may not be appropriate in cultures in developing countries. According to Honwana (2006:152-153), mental health professionals have studied the potential application of therapies such as "talk therapy" in treating postwar psychological disorders such as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and have found that this model of healing may not work in countries devastated by civil war, such as Cambodia. In the United States, soldiers return home to a country virtually untouched by the war in which they have participated and purportedly resume their normal lives. In countries such as Cambodia, where civil war and tyrannical leaders have torn up every aspect of their previous lives, there is no "normal" to which individuals can return.

In countries such as Cambodia where individuals return to war-torn villages and cities, these victims need a venue in which to discuss their experiences and retell their stories. It is important that all affected individuals (including children) returning or emerging from war be encouraged to talk about what they saw and did, and not repress it.

The experiences of children who have returned from warfare is complicated by their apparent complicity in the wartime activity. According to Rosen (2005:17), the majority of child soldiers are not forcibly recruited or abducted to join because that "the least dangerous place to be in a war today is in the military" (2005:17). For example, according to Kamm (1998:32), during the Vietnam War, the Vietnamese Communist armies moved into the areas bordering Vietnam and set up camps, supply depots,

hospitals, and many command centers. This made Cambodia a target for massive bombings by the United States. In this and similar scenarios, the villagers were actually safer if they joined the military and lived on or near command posts and areas protected by the military, rather than in areas targeted for attacks.

Each child is subjected to different influences that determine their beliefs, opinions, and participation. Influences such as family, community, and leadership, are a few that have an effect on children. In addition, a child's age, sex, and race are important factors that cannot be controlled for. Research by Preston in 1940 (Tolley 1973:7) found that "older children condemned war more than the youngest polled and that children formed opinions with little factual knowledge. In my conversations, I learned that people thought that young children under the direction of Pol Pot would not have disapproved of his instructions to kill everyone including family members and to block out their past and their identity. This horrific revelation underscores the fact that what Cambodian children experienced during the revolution damaged them psychologically. Even when the revolution ended and the Cambodians were freed from the Khmer Rouge, they could not recover and be happy. As Ouk (1998:238) described it, "in August 1978 we are freed from the Khmer Rouge. But we cannot be happy. We have lost many loved ones, and their innocent spirits remain with us." The memories of what happened have not been dealt with to this day.

Support is crucial to reintegrating individuals, particularly children, who have experienced horrors. Honwana (2006:109) says that in developing countries such as Mozambique, Angola, and Cambodia, when children come back from war, they are not given the support necessary to free them from psychologically from the torture and

killing they have both inflicted and endured. Instead, in these communities, strong spiritual beliefs lead the afflicted persons not to be treated as individuals, but as part of a family and a community. This communal approach leads to the returning soldier's inability to deal with their individual feelings, fears, and behaviors and, subsequently, to an inability to fit back into society (Singer (2005:183).

Few mechanisms are in place to deal with the unique problems children face after participating in a war. Singer (2005:184) writes that

> it was not until the 1999 Lome Accords that any peace treaty even recognized the existence of child soldiers or made any specific provision for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. It stated that the Government shall accord particular attention to the issue of child soldiers . . . and accordingly mobilize resources, both within the country and from the Office of the UN, UNICEF, and other agencies, to address the special needs of these children in the existing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

Such a dangerous lack of attention to the effects of war on children still exists in our society today. In East Timor, the under-eighteen members of the rebel FALINTIL group were simply sent back to their villages. The UN had few specialists available to aid these children in accessing the support that would normally come with demobilization (Singer 2005:184). Many children had to resort to taking on the identities of deceased adult soldiers in order to gain access to support programs.

As a result of the lack of support following participation in a war, many child soldiers wind up on the street. Often they are emotional and physically disabled, perpetuating the challenges experienced because of a lack of education. With no resources, many are drawn to crime or back to armed conflict, and the cycle of child soldier recruitment begins again. Singer (2005:186) quotes Neil Boothby, a child psychologist and former senior coordinator for refugee children with the UN, who says

that “I think it’s safe to say that unless we’re able to break the cycle of violence, unless we’re able to focus on this teenage population specifically . . . it’ll be the teenager who picks up the gun and starts the next cycle

The Effects of Development on Cambodia

Because of the growth potential seen in the past decade, Southeast Asia is a destination toward which many organizations are focusing their attention and resources to aid in what they see as development, which is a necessity, from a western point of view. Development is seen as a unique solution for adapting and surviving in the modern world. Some developing countries are attracted to modernization, which they want to believe will bring them out of the desperate conditions in which they live. But many nations do not understand what development will do to their country’s culture, their beliefs, or their children.

Many times, developing countries are requested to comply with a proposition for change generated by an outsider, an idea that is supposed to enhance their way of life. Most agents of developmental change, however, fail to consider how the individuals who are intended to be the direct beneficiaries of this change will be affected by the transformation process. Many times the agents forcing change wind up denying people the right to control their future. “These forced changes, encouraged under the banner of democratic efforts, paradoxically deny the populations the right to control their future and, should they wish, to preserve their own way of life and their self-representation against unwanted interference and unforeseen impacts” (Bourdier 2008:4). These developing nations are forced to change without realizing what it means for their culture’s future. In recent years, several modernization projects have been instituted by

large corporations that see fiscal growth opportunities, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

One project that will have great implications for the future of Cambodia is the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Economic Corridor. The GMS Economic Corridor covers the area of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Southwest China and was financed by ADB in 1992. This corridor actually is made up of three superhighways that will link the vast area between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and traverse the nation of Cambodia. This corridor has become one of the most important events in recent history, because it requires cooperation among all the countries for its success, including countries historically at war with one another. These corridors are expected to improve transportation, energy, communication, environment, tourism, human resources, and trade.

Most other countries have much more to gain from these economic corridors, however, than does Cambodia. It is important to take a deeper look at the implications of GMS Economic Corridor for Cambodia. Along most of the highways live minority groups in rural areas stricken with poverty. In addition to the seizing and stripping of the land from the locals, the building of these highways may result in population movements, human trafficking, disease and health issues, erosion of cultural heritage, and disruption of traditional societies. According to Saichan (2008:14), "in addition, land would be transferred to private companies through investment in the form of land concessions, which can lead to land conflicts, and natural-resource-related problems such as deforestation…This would directly damage the biodiversity and sustainability of the local

people livelihoods as they rely on forest resources." Taking away a people's livelihood will also take away their culture and identity.

The places where people live are marked by distinctive characteristics that form their identity. These are represented in symbolic ways, including spiritual traditions and beliefs, as well as physical ways, such as in language, art, song, and dance. Dwelling places offer a past, are part of the present, and suggest a continuous future. "This is particularly applicable in Asia, where, in my view, some of the most outstanding examples of the world's living history and heritage reside" (Taylor 2008:2). There is a need to recognize the importance of these places and encourage their continuity so that the best of traditions and culture can be sustained as change takes place.

Due to deforestation and development, people are being "robbed" of their land. Wealthy individuals, foreigners, and corporations are buying land from poor farmers at very cheap prices, thereby taking advantage of their ignorance; alternatively, they are purchasing land through illegal sales or intimidation (Maffii 2008:2). These "land grabbers" have been known to burn down a village to intimidate people in the next village so that they will either give away their land or sell it very cheaply. The large increase in the value of land has resulted in people from other parts of Asia moving into Cambodia, bringing with them a different culture, new customs, and modernity, thus eroding the traditions and identity of the Cambodian people.

In Southeast Asia, inter-country migration and border maintenance have been important issues for many years. Transportation and settlement across borders have resulted in a melting pot of cultures. "National boundaries gained prominence in mainland Southeast Asia during the 19th century as a result of contact with English and

French colonial powers, and quickly became a crucial tool for producing and reproducing the 'nation-states,' including Siam, even though it was not formally colonized" (Baird 2008:5). Usually, the Chinese and Thai cultures infiltrate and replace the cultures and identity of smaller, less prosperous countries, such as Cambodia.

Identity—Its Uses and Misuses

The issue of identity, both cultural and individual, is particularly pressing for Cambodia, in light of a revolution that hinged to a significant degree on the manipulation of identity. Saloth Sar used identity to deceive the Cambodian people by going into hiding and emerging with a new identity. Prior to the takeover by the Khmer Rouge in 1975, he went into hiding in order to escape the U.S. bombings during the Vietnam War and disassociate himself from current political parties. Sar emerged in 1975 in the People's Representative Assembly as the "leader of the rubber workers" under the pseudonym "Pol Pot." According to Chandler (1999:111) the new name was probably chosen to conceal Sar's identity as the leader of the Cambodian Communist party. The identity cover-up was thorough: "in 1977, the Cambodian ambassador in Beijing told a visitor that Comrade Pot has always used that name; Comrade Saloth Sar had perished during the war" (Chandler 1999:111).

When the People's Representative Assembly met in mid-April 1976 to approve the new government of Democratic Kampuchea, Pol Pot began to fulfill his lifelong dream of transforming the country. With a new identity but dreams intact from when he had first become a Communist in 1952, Sar/Pot embarked on a program that would destroy 25% of the population. While Ricoeur speaks of reinventing identity to bring about meaningful change, Sar's transformation into Pol Pot offers an example of the

ways in which identity can also be reinvented to bring harm to a society—including one of the worst genocides in recorded human history.

Genocide and Education

Many genocides have occurred in numerous nations in this century alone. In order for people, both in Cambodia and elsewhere, to embrace the idea of "never again," these horrible stories of terror must be taught as part of schools' curriculum. Along with teaching about the atrocities of genocide, people could also learn about human rights. New organizations such as The International Association of Genocide Scholars, founded in 1994, are now promoting the study and teaching of genocide and its prevention, with the most notable example studied being the Holocaust (Ensalaco 2005:234). A small but growing number of courses at the college level include comparative analysis and use new case law, international tribunals, and truth commissions, as well as developments in the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations seeking to address human suffering. "Multi-cultural or tolerance education introduces different cultures into the classroom with the goals of mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance" (Ensalaco 2005:234).

Genocide Education in Cambodia

The tribunal for the Cambodian revolution of the 1970s has gone unresolved for over thirty years. A large amount of money is still committed to this tribunal globally; a recent article in the *Japan News* reported that "Japan pledged Sunday to provide another $21 million to the U.N.-backed Khmer Rouge tribunal, bringing its contributions since 2005 to $45.5 million" (January 11, 2009). However, despite global backing and support, the current Cambodian government is still protecting its past leaders from coming to trial,

and corruption is still rampant. In a recent newspaper article (January 9, 2009) the two lawyers representing "Brother Number Two," Nuon Chea, one of five former Khmer Rouge leaders due to stand trial and responsible for the mass killings, reported that they are being intimidated by the tribunal. The lawyers went on to explain that corruption still exists in Cambodia today, saying that the former Khmer Rouge leaders

> feel intimidated by the judges in the Cambodia tribunal….the judges are threatening legal action against them because they are attempting to expose corrupt practices at the tribunal….judges and other court personnel had to buy their appointments by handing over a significant part of their salaries to government officials.

Although finance is a large portion of the problems with the education system in Cambodia, ideology going back the French colonization has created the backdrop for Cambodians to be an inadequately educated people. According to Kamm (1998:26), France's colonization in the 1800s was condescending and patronizing in that it trained hardly any Cambodians to perform functions of authority. In addition, little attempt was made to educate Cambodians to take their place in the modern world. Problems of this nature still exist today; Cambodians are not being educated to carry out supervisory and decision-making roles.

Challenges

Financially, Cambodia does not have the resources to change its education system. Even if it did, it lacks the qualified institutions and individuals needed to improve. Although Cambodia started to concentrate on building up its primary schools and later its secondary schools in the 1950s, all gains were wiped out when the Khmer Rouge destroyed everything during 1975-1979. Because people with an education are more likely to question authority, many intellectuals lost their lives. "In the Khmer

Rouge period, many of those with education and training were deliberately put to death; intellectual life was virtually eliminated" (Shawcross 1994:84). If the intellectuals did not lose their lives, they became refugees to escape the genocide. "Of the more than 20,000 teachers in the country at the beginning of the 1970s, only about 5,000 remain. Most of the teachers went with the flood of refugees to Thailand and attempted to reach third countries" (Kiljunen 1984:39). Because so few intellectuals and artisans remain from that period, Cambodia has had to rely on employing Vietnamese individuals and other foreigners, adding to the ethnic tensions Cambodia already experiences from border disputes and other issues.

In addition to an academic education, Cambodians need to be educated on how to maintain good health. In order for children to be ready to learn, they must be healthy. In a country where the health system is weak and villages are remote, one of the main challenges is accessibility. Overall, public health care facilities are difficult to access; the roads are in especially poor condition during the rainy season, the distances are wide, and health staff are not always present in the health posts or health centers. The maternal mortality ratio is very high in Cambodia (472 per 100,000 live births) (Nikles 2008:2).

Developing an appropriate education system that includes health education will not succeed unless the inadequate conditions are immediately addressed. Many school buildings are temporary, with dirt floors, few desks, and few to no materials. Teachers work two to three shifts a day (including teaching adult education at night) for very low wages. Most teachers are without formal training (Kiljunen 1984:39), as my research partner Chanroath confirmed. His mother has been a teacher for over 20 years. He described how she came to be a teacher, saying that "after the Vietnamese in 1979,

somebody that can read and write just a little bit also choose, was choose to be a teacher. Like my mother. She just finished grade seven or grade eight."

In order to rise above these problems, Cambodia needs international assistance to rebuild itself. Although many NGOs are placing their focus in Cambodia, the nation is still seen as a risk for investors. According to Phyrum (2007) these risks include the lack of physical capital to sustain any improvements; the absence of infrastructure; the uncertainties of the rapidly growing population; a small consumer market; corruption; and civil disorder.

Some developments are occurring despite the slow progress of the education reforms in Cambodia, according to a report out by the NGO forum on Cambodia. There is the Education for All (EFA) National Plan (May 2003) and a draft Law of Education, in which ethnic minorities are cited as having special needs and having the right to formal education in their mother tongue (April 2005:25). These first stirrings of change offer an opportunity to educate Cambodia on the importance of early childhood education, which includes the ages of birth to five years old.

Health and Early Childhood Development

Most neuroscientists believe that at birth the human brain has all the neurons it will ever have. Some connections, such as those that control such automatic functions as breathing and heartbeat, are in place at birth, but most of the individual's mental circuitry results from experiences that greet the newborn and most likely continue throughout his or her life. Thomas Lewis, M.D., well known for his studies on brain research (2000:114) writes, "babies remember their mother's voice and face within thirty-six hours of birth.... A newborn does not recognize his father's voice, indicating that neonatal

preference reflect learning before birth." How and when neural connections are formed is a topic of debate. Some researchers believe the circuits are completed by age five or six. Other studies extend the period of development to the later elementary school years.

The United States recognizes the importance of education, including education that begins prior to kindergarten. Research shows that "a child's brain develops most dramatically during the first three years of life, and what parents and caregivers do during those early years makes a profound different for the rest of their children's lives" (First 5 2001). The Head Start program was devised by the United States federal government in 1965 to ensure the health and well-being of the nation's youngest children (ages birth to five). It provides medical care, nutritious meals, development of social skills, psychological counseling, development of basic learning skills, and work with parents to ensure that they help their children thrive. "The key belief behind the program is that a healthy, well-balanced child will be better equipped to learn. Many poor children go without the basic necessities for a healthy and happy start to life" (Uradnik 2002:145).

Research has shown that children need to have their basic needs met before they can be ready to learn. If they feel safe, fed, and healthy, they will be prepared to attend school and be open to learning. Research shows that learning occurs as early as the womb, which means that children are learning about the life they are about to encounter while beginning the development of their personalities and temperament. One can conclude from this that even an unborn child is learning from his or her environment, which will have significant implications on their development of their identity.

Summary

As the literature shows, many factors in the history of Cambodia make successful development and an appropriate education system difficult to achieve. If people are told enough times that they are useless or helpless, they will come to believe it. The Khmer Rouge reinforced the notion that the Cambodians were useless people. Their identity has been reduced to that of a people doomed to abject poverty, and little attention is given to understanding how to bring about the change that could reinvent their culture and reinvigorate their traditions.

Cambodians must overcome many obstacles in order to provide an education system that is accessible to all children. Through imagination and narrative, Cambodians can change the part of their identity that passes along such negative beliefs and values and reinvent themselves into the rich culture they once were—a culture responsible for creating Angkor Wat, one of the most majestic architectural wonders in the world.

In the next Chapter, I describe the research protocol and research process in detail. It contains a description of the conceptual framework, the research site, the research partners, the data collection process, research questions, the data analysis process, the results of the pilot study, the journal kept by the researcher and the background of the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH PROTOCOL/PROCESS

Introduction

The study described in the sections that follow is designed as a hermeneutic field-based inquiry using the research protocol established in Herda (1999:96-115). The first section presents the conceptual framework, critical hermeneutics, which is used to interpret the data collected for this study. This section includes a description of the three theoretical concepts, narrative identity, fusion of horizons, and imagination, upon which my analysis is based and which serve as my research categories. The second section provides a description of the research protocol and the data collection process that occurred. A description of my pilot project and the key themes that emerged from it are important because they place guidelines and boundaries in place. The final section provides details of my background.

Conceptual Framework

Critical Hermeneutic Participatory Research

Language, understanding, and culture are constantly changing. Because each researcher uses her own interpretative method, there is no single set of instructions on how to conduct hermeneutic participatory research. The protocol used in hermeneutic research offers a guideline for how a researcher designs and conducts his or her study. The Cambodians I had conversations with used narrative to retell the stories of their past and this provided me an opportunity to interpret their stories and derive meanings from them.

Paul Ricoeur believes that, in order to live a meaningful life, one must always be reflecting on one's past in order to reinvent oneself. This research offered me an opportunity to interpret the Cambodian experience during the revolution of the 1970s through the use of conversations and narrative text, and then to attempt to understand the suffering that the Cambodians endured. Through dialogue, it is possible to understand others and imagine how life could yet be different. By using interpretation and imagination, I attempted to understand Cambodian history and suffering, and to arrive at some ideas that could be considered in light of our efforts to ensure that such suffering never happens again. Likewise, the Cambodian people could confront their past, move past placing blame about what happened to them, and reinvent themselves for the future through the use of narrative identity. This process could result in a plan that calls for collaborative efforts on the parts of policy makers, educators, NGO's and community members.

Narrative Identity

According to Ricoeur (1992:141-145), identity is understood through narrative. The narrative form draws very different and sometimes unrelated events or elements together into a plot-structured story and gives it a temporal span. Narrative unites all of a lifetime's elements. Narratives are made up not only of actions and events, but also of characters or persons. Plots relate the mutual development of a story to a character or set of characters. Every character in a story acts and is acted upon. The narrative's characters can initiate action when their doings and sufferings are evaluated, and can reinvent their past, present, and future. After reading or hearing the narrative, the reader can evaluate a character's behavior. Ricoeur (1992:141-145) describes the hermeneutic method by

saying that "one evaluates how the person responds when confronted by another living being who is in some need that the person can address."

A narrative about human persons tells of both the connections that unify multiple actions over a span of time; performed, in most cases, by several persons, and the connections that link multiple viewpoints and the assessments of those actions. "The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character" (1992:147-48).

Ricoeur (1984:52) believes that how one lives in the present is based on memories and traditions from the past. This phenomenon emerges in Cambodian history. Due to brainwashing during the war, children that were trained as soldiers had no conscience about choosing which adults should be executed. Their feelings, families, and histories were either expunged or taken from them. After the war was over, these children had no homes, families, emotions, or skills. The children who survived the war are now adults and have children of their own. Looking at their history, one wonders what past they can even recall. Based on their past, what kind of life are they living, and what stories are they telling their children?

According to Ricoeur, (1992:2-4), identity is made up of a link between self-sameness, or *idem*, and selfhood, or *ipse*. The self's idem-identity gives the self a spatio-temporal sameness—the unique part of us that does not change. The self's ipse-identity provides the unique ability to initiate something new, to innovate, which is instrumental in healing. Without both sorts of identity, there is no self. A comprehensive account of any genuine action must express the way it is related to both of these orders of selfhood

(1992:2-4). Through sameness, we can see how we are similar to others and see ourselves as another or another as oneself. If we can see others as ourselves, than we can be concerned for them and come to understand their suffering. The happiness of others becomes important to us also. Seeing oneself as another takes time.

Ricoeur's theory of time, known as mimesis (a term he borrowed from Aristotle), can be used to understand how traditions and behavior can be saved or forgotten over time. This theory of mimesis is made up of three domains: a past, m_1; a present mediating act, m_2; and a future, m_3. Traditions are developed and maintained over time as an individual or culture reviews and contemplates the past (m_1). In contemplating the past, an individual or culture thinks about what they would like the future to hold (m_3), and then creates a praxis (ethical action) to be carried out in the present (m_2). According to Ricoeur, in order to project desires and actions to the future, one must have an understanding of the importance of the past (1984:52). By considering the past and looking to the future, we can make our actions in the present meaningful.

Without a past, can a person have an identity? Identity is developed through individual and cultural situations, and is capable of reinventing itself through the reflection and recollection of the past. If people must recall or reflect on their past to develop and reinvent their identity, what does that mean for the identity of Cambodian survivors of the Khmer Rouge? For many young adults, the idea of home brings back memories of family and the neighborhood in which they grew up; however, for the children who were soldiers in Pol Pot's regime, childhood memories of home involve the remembrance of fear, suffering, and killing in order to survive.

Many Cambodians who were born after the killing fields are unaware of what happened to their parents and communities during the reign of Pol Pot. In an article written about the discovery of graves in the killing fields, Mydans (2007) quotes Youk Chang, a leading expert on the Khmer Rouge period, who says, "for younger Cambodians, who know remarkably little about the Khmer Rouge period, it's just a dead person [referring to bones found in graves]."

Ricoeur (1992:21-23) believes that the self has the ability to act and to suffer, and that our actions are connected to our cognitive processes and our values. All human beings suffer to some extent during their lifetimes, and suffering becomes part of the past that we use to reinvent ourselves. Identity is instrumental in the ability to heal oneself, and healing is done in relation to other people. In order to heal, people need to understand themselves in relation to another before they can forgive. In order to move past what happened to them under the Khmer Rouge, the Cambodian people must reflect on their past so that they can reinvent themselves and eventually forgive others in order to heal themselves as a culture.

During the reign of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodians did not explain, contemplate, or reflect much about their identity and their culture; in fact, to do so could be deadly. Reading and understanding Ricoeur's ideas about the ability of generations to pass down traditions and identity reveals how the actions of the Khmer Rouge in separating families and destroying educational and cultural institutions could destroy the identity of the Cambodian culture. Sichan Siv (2008) writes,

> Cambodians celebrate their New Year in mid-April. They were not always able to do so. Under Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese rule, those ancient traditions were forbidden, impossible. But now Cambodia is free again and the festivities are in the open. As I wander the country of my youth, I see people spending the long

> holiday praying at temples and visiting relatives. And I remember. My family used to hold a reunion on April 13 to mark both the New Year and my mother's birthday. In 1975, we had no idea that it would be our last.

Paul Ricoeur believes that, in order to live a meaningful life, we must always be reflecting on our past in order to reinvent ourselves. This research offered me an opportunity to interpret Cambodia's history during the revolution of the 1970s through conversations and narrative text, and attempted to understand the suffering that the Cambodians endured. By using interpretation and imagination, I attempted to understand their history and suffering, and possibly arrive at solutions to ensure that such suffering never happens again.

From our own experience, we know that it is common in education to emphasize knowledge and skill over identity. The success of learning in Cambodia requires the understanding that although knowledge and skills are important, identity is also important. As Herda (1999:9) points out, "we are always in relationship—in our personal life and in our professional life—and are in the position of [being] respondent to the other one." These relationships create the opportunity for care, and "people who care for one another will more than likely engage in genuine conversations about issues facing them" (Herda 2007:11). That relationship creates a connectedness with others from which care for another can blossom.

Ricoeur also discusses care, and uses the concept of solicitude to describe how care can result in meaningful action. He notes (1992:193) that "solicitude adds the dimension of value, whereby each person is *irreplaceable* in our affection and our esteem." He ties this to the importance of being in relationship, adding that "it is first for the other that I am irreplaceable. In this sense, solicitude replies to the other's esteem for

me." This idea of a relationship is critical for people in education who are creating policy. Ricoeur (1992:193) asserts that "living well is not limited to interpersonal relationships but extends to the life of institutions." Herda (1999:13) reinforces the importance of extending this concept to agencies, noting that "the critical point is to change relationships among members in organizations and communities. This change does not begin by our changing the other, but by changing oneself." It is important for the individuals who work within the educational system to bring about change on the organizational level that will ultimately results in change in the individual level; in this case, the young child learning in school.

Fusion of Horizons

Gadamer's theory of the fusion of horizons can be described as the understanding between two people through conversation that leads to a greater understanding of the person's views, cultures, traditions, suffering, and the like. Gadamer (2006:269) writes, "all that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or test. But this openness always includes our situating the other meaning in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relation to it." In order for two people to come to an understanding of each other's view, they must come to the conversation with an openness and willingness to consider another point of view. People need to allow themselves to hear what the other person is saying. The two parties do not need to agree, but they need to have reached a deeper understanding of the other party by being open to considering the past. Being open to understanding history is critical in using the hermeneutic approach, for …"the past has a truly pervasive power in the phenomenon of understanding" (Gadamer 1976:xv) and …the great horizon of the past, out of which our

culture and our present live, influences us in everything we want, hope for, or fear in the future. History is only present to us in light of our futurity (Gadamer 1976: 8-9).

As parties move toward a deeper understanding, there is continuous movement to give and take. Change occurs because of a reciprocal relationship that moves between persons and time that includes the past and the future. Gadamer (2006:303) writes,

> the historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never absolutely bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. This, the horizon of the past, out of which all human life lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion.

In addition to asserting the need to be open-minded and allow ourselves to consider another point of view, Gadamer says that the horizon is always changing. As long as a person is open and willing to consider other views, there will be many opportunities for a fusion of horizons.

In order to reach an understanding of ourselves and others and gain perspective on our history, we must have a sense of the meaningfulness of the past. Because of war, turmoil, and atrocities, cultures may not be able to look back on the past. They may be forbidden to do so by the authorities or subconsciously avoiding it due to traumatic events. Cambodia is an example of a culture in which there are periods with little available historical data due to political events that either purposely expunged records or forced the non-communication of history. The revolution and the turmoil of the 1970s under Pol Pot's regime in Cambodia exemplify the inability of a culture to come to a fusion of horizons and understand its past. As an alternative to having historical reference points, the use of imagination can provide people or a culture with an opportunity to find meaning and make changes for a better future.

Imagination

Imagination is integral to discerning the meaning of the past and creating ethical and meaningful change for the future. Kearney (1988:370) writes that "the poetic imagination would nourish the conviction that things can be changed. The first and most effective step in this direction is to begin to imagine that the world as it could be otherwise." Imagination allows us to synthesize facts, events, and feelings into something meaningful depending on the level of understanding. The participatory research process represents a means for facilitation such imagination, for "it is in conversations with speakers oriented to reaching understanding that the validity claims are raised—that there is the possibility of telling our story of the past and evaluating it" Herda (1999:72). The process of engaging in conversation allows both parties to come to a better understanding of themselves and the other. This understanding of the other is essential to collectively imagine a future that brings prosperity and progress for successful development in Cambodia to end the poverty that encompasses much of the nation. Although imagination alone cannot bring about the change needed to end poverty, it can play an important role in guiding plans for change.

Through imagination, Cambodians can reflect on their history and traditions, and imagine a future that maintains and supports the practices of their ancestors. While not all history and traditions may be worthy of carrying on, it is important to consider how to maintain the ones that are worth keeping. If a person can imagine a future without poverty, fear of government, and the protection of human rights, one can imagine how their identity could be different.

If Cambodians involved in leadership and creating policy can reflect on their past and imagine what they would like the future to hold for themselves and their children, they can envision a plan of action to project a future that will provide an education, empowering children to learn skills and think as entrepreneurs. A generation of educated children will ensure that tyrannical leaders such as Pol Pot can never come to power again, A generation of educated children can turn the cycle of poverty around for Cambodians.

Summary of the Theory

I use narrative identity, fusion of horizons, and imagination to reflect on the past in order to come up with a plan for the future. During the revolution of the 1970s, the Khmer Rouge forbade the rice prisoners to think about their past; however, as many of my research partners discussed, it was impossible not to do so. If people are told enough times that they are useless or helpless, they will come to believe it and the Khmer Rouge reinforced the notion that the Cambodians were a useless people. Through interpretation, Cambodians can change the part of their identity that passes along such negative beliefs and values. They can plan for a future that tells the next generation what a useful society they in fact are. The next section provides details on the research guidelines and the data collection.

Entrée and Research Site

On May 12 of 2008, I volunteered for two weeks in a private school, the Rotary Elementary School of Mongkol Borei, in Sisophon, Cambodia. The school is located approximately three and a half hours by road outside of Siem Reap and approximately 13 kilometers from the Thai border. It was originally created to teach Cambodian children

Chinese. According to the principal and staff at this school it was established to provide a free education to all poor students in the surrounding area. Due to time limitations, my desire to conduct at least ten conversations with research partners, and my desire to experience the culture, it was the only school I visited on my trip to Cambodia.

The Rotary Club of San Mateo first became involved with the Mongkol Borei elementary school through wheelchair donations and later expanded the funding to include scholarships for all the children that attended. Some children ride their bikes over an hour one way to school every day. The Rotary school provides an academic curriculum that includes basic math skills and instruction in the Khmer and English languages. The school also provides children with a full meal every day, transportation if needed (includes gifts of bikes), uniforms, books, and materials. In addition to addressing the daily needs of children, the school gives each child a Christmas gift of five dollars as well as a bag of rice for each family. For many of these children, the meal they receive at lunchtime at the school is their only meal of the day.

My introduction to the founder of the school came through a mutual friend at a Christmas party in December of 2007. I initially traveled to Cambodia in March of 2008, where I attended a conference in Siem Reap on "Mainland Southeast Asia at its Margins: Minority Groups and Borders." At this conference I met many presenters and consultants who conducted research and work with local NGOs. Several of them agreed to meet with me when I returned in May 2008. When I returned to the United States after the conference, I met with the founder of the school at a restaurant in San Mateo, California. He introduced me to several of his partners and to local businessmen who were involved with the school that the Rotary Club of San Mateo funded in Sisophon. At lunch with the

founder, I was offered an opportunity to volunteer and conduct my research with teachers, parents, and administrators.

Figure 4. Researcher working with children in Rotary school.

My professional background in the United States includes conducting observations of teachers and working with them to improve their practice. This piqued the school's interest in bringing me in to help support the teachers and children. During the two weeks I volunteered at the school, I worked with the teachers on their English pronunciation and their teaching styles; I also worked with the children and helped them learn proper English usage and pronunciation. According to the principal, the Cambodian style of learning at most schools consists of rote memorization and standing at attention while shouting out answers, a method that brought to mind the unfortunate training of child soldiers. Upon seeing this, I made it a goal to demonstrate the benefits of working with children individually and in small groups, as well as providing an

interactive learning experience in order to model methods other than employing the rote learning style.

After spending two weeks at the school, I traveled to Siem Reap, where I spent three days conducting conversations with a physician and a former teacher who now work in the professional development field, helping to train teachers in new, more appropriate teaching styles. I spent one day at the Khmer Studies Institute Library, located on the Wat Damnak temple property, where I read through books, documents, and dissertations written about the period during the takeover of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to1979. During this time in Siem Reap, I also made my second trip to Angkor Wat to view the temples. These medieval temples were the reason I was drawn to Cambodia and this study in the first place. After spending time in Siem Reap, I traveled to Phnom Penh for a third week, where I conducted conversations with my research partners; interacted with locals at the markets; and visited museums, historical sites, and libraries.

Identifying Participants

My ten research participants included Cambodians that resided in Sisophon; Siem Reap; Phnom Penh; and Oakland, California. The participants in Sisophon were either associated with the school where I volunteered or with a local university. They included the principal, teachers, professors, parents, and an employee of an NGO. In Siem Reap, as previously mentioned, I had conversations with a teacher trainer and a physician. In Phnom Penh, I had a conversation with the Director General of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education. When I returned to California, I conducted a research

conversation with a Cambodian refugee who was a program manager for a health program for Cambodian refugees.

My participants were introduced to me through a variety of sources. I met my contacts through one of three ways: at the conference I attended in Siem Reap in March 2008, through my work at the Rotary school, or through my contacts in the United States. All but one of my participants live in Cambodia, and some had email addresses with limited access to the internet. My initial communication with many of my research partners was conducted over the phone when I arrived in Cambodia in May; I had emailed letters of invitation to all my partners, only to discover that most had not received them. Through phone calls from my hotels, I set up my appointments with each partner. My conversations, except for one, were conducted in person one person at a time while I was in Cambodia. In attempting to follow up with my participants after my return to the United States, I found it difficult to get in touch with them by email. I mailed thank-you letters to each partner after my return to the U.S. The following represents a list of my research partners.

Deng Sophoeurt is the manager and third grade teacher at the Rotary school. At the time of the interview, he was approximately 55-65 years old, had survived the killing fields, and had custody of his six-year-old granddaughter, who attended the Rotary school. He did not speak English, so the conversation was translated by the Lin, the principal, who also introduced us.

Kimlin Ley (Lin) is the principal of the Rotary school in Sisophon, Cambodia. I was introduced to her through a mutual friend, one of the founders of the school. Kimlin, also known as Lin, was approximately 20 to 30 years old; fluent in English, Khmer, and

French; had been principal of the school for the past two years; and had a bachelor's degree in education. She was currently taking English translation classes at a local university in Battambang, and had been applying to graduate schools in the United States. Lin was responsible for setting up all logistics of my trip and took me sightseeing on weekends when school was not in session. For the first two weeks I was in Cambodia, she accompanied me everywhere, making communication within the rural areas possible. Because most of the people who live in the rural areas are poor and not well-educated, it is difficult to find Cambodians who speak English. This was true of all of the parents of the children who attended the Rotary school. Only the principal and teachers spoke English.

Yim Piehnirorth (Niroth) was a teacher for twelve years prior to taking his current position with KBA (Khmer Buddhist Association). He was approximately 40-50 years old, had survived the killing fields, had six children, was taking classes in English translation at the University in Battambang, and was introduced to me through the principal of the Rotary school. He was fluent in English, French, and Khmer.

Chen Saordeut is a language professor at the University in Battambang. He was approximately 30-40 years old and was introduced to me through the principal of the Rotary school. He was fluent in English, French and Khmer.

Three parents agreed to participate in a focus group that Lin had arranged for me at my request. The three parents, who were approximately 30-40 years old, included two men and one woman; all had survived the killing fields. They were all farmers and had at least one child attending the Rotary school. The focus group was conducted in Khmer, and Lin (the principal) translated the questions and responses for me. These parents were

most appreciative of the opportunity for their children to receive a free education: when expressing their appreciation during the focus group, all three parents became emotional.

Sokun Phuong is an accounting professor at the University in Siem Reap. He was approximately 30-40 years old and was introduced to me in Battambang through the principal of the Rotary School. He was fluent in English, French, and Khmer. We shared a cab ride from Battambang to Siem Reap, which is when I conducted our conversation.

Malis Phoun is a physician, approximately 30-40 years old. She worked for the World Food Organization and was fluent in English, Khmer, and French. She lived in Phnom Penh but met with me in Siem Reap after she had attended a conference there that day. She was introduced to me through her cousin, Sambo Ly.

Chanroath Ra is a former primary school teacher who now provides professional development for teachers in Siem Reap. He was approximately 20-30 years old and worked for an organization that was sponsored by the Belgium government. He was working on his master's degree in education, and was fluent in English, Khmer, and French. I was introduced to him at the conference I attended in Siem Reap in March 2008.

Dr. Thavin Pak is the Director General of Higher Education for Cambodia, and was approximately 55-65 years old at the time of the interview. He escaped the killing fields in 1979 and fled to the United States. He lived in California with his wife and two daughters until three years ago, when he returned to Cambodia at his friend's request to take the position he currently holds. He taught language for three years at the University of California at Berkeley. He is fluent in English, Khmer, and French. He was introduced to me by my pilot study partner.

Sambo Ly is a refugee who escaped the killing fields and arrived in the United States in 1979. She was approximately 40-50 years old, single, and had custody of her sister's three children, whom she sponsored and brought to the United States. She was the program director of a health project for Cambodian refugees in Oakland, California. She was fluent in English, French, and Khmer, and was introduced to me through my pilot study partner.

List Of Participants

Name	Age Range	Occupation	Home	Organization
Deng Sophoeurt	55-65	Manager and 3rd - grade Teacher	Cambodia	Rotary Elementary School of Mongkol Borei, private school
Kimlin Ley	30-40	Principal	Cambodia	Rotary Elementary School of Mongkol Borei, private school
Yim Piehnirorth (Nirorth)	40-50	Former Teacher and NGO employee	Cambodia	KBA (Khmer Buddhist Association) Battambang
Chen Saordeut	30-40	Professor	Cambodia	University in Battambang
3 Parents at school	30-50	Farmers	Cambodia	Rotary Elementary School of Mongkol Borei, private school
Sokun Phuong	30-40	Professor	Cambodia	University in Siem Reap
Malis Phoun	30-40	Physician	Cambodia	World Food Organization

Chanroath Ra	20-30	Primary School Teacher Trainer	Cambodia	Siem Reap NGO sponsored by Belgium government
Dr. Thavin Pak	55-65	Director General of Higher Education	Cambodia	Ministry of Education
Sambo Ly	40-50	Program Manager	Oakland	Refugee Health Program

Data Collection

My data collection consisted of a comprehensive compilation of my observations and conversations from my three trips to Cambodia. The timeline for my data collection and analysis spanned from May 2008 to November 2008. My first trip to Cambodia in the summer of 2007 resulted in a collection of notes in my journal, as well as over 600 photographs documenting my trip. My second visit occurred in March 2008, when I attended a global conference hosted by the Khmer Studies Institute on the topic of Minority Groups and Borders. During this conference I attended many presentations on the challenges Asian countries face today regarding marginalized minorities and their loss of identity and culture. My third trip, mentioned previously, lasted three weeks, during which I volunteered at the Rotary school located in Sisophon.

The Rotary school provides a rigorous program requiring that children attend school Monday through Saturday. The school day started at 7 AM and ended at 5 PM. There was a one-hour lunch break, during which I played soccer with the children. The school was a primary school offering children an education in grades one through six; each class contained approximately 30-35 children. Due to varying levels of education, all classes contained multiple ages of students; for example, the third grade contained

children as young as nine years and as old as 18 years. The total enrollment at the school was approximately 200 children. It was difficult for the school to keep an accurate attendance count because it was not uncommon for children not to show up for a couple of days if they were needed at home; therefore, the school had difficulty discerning whether a child had dropped out or simply stayed home for several days. This lack of consistency in attendance had implications for the learning occurring at the school: children would miss days of instruction and then lag behind other students. The lack of individualized instruction made it difficult for them to catch up with the rest of the class.

At the principal's request, I commenced my volunteer efforts by rotating through each of the six classrooms (grades one through six) and observed the teachers as they worked with the children. I have been working with teachers in preschools and primary schools in the United States for the last six years; the understanding at the Rotary school was that I would make suggestions based on my experience in the U. S. and then encourage teachers to reflect on whether my suggestions would be culturally appropriate. After modeling different styles, I met with teachers and discussed their thoughts on whether these suggestions could be modified to fit their needs and the needs of the students. It was not expected that I would go in and change the teaching styles of the teachers if they did not feel it was appropriate for their classroom.

For two weeks I worked with children on their English pronunciation by working through their daily lesson plans. We reviewed math, geography, and literature in English. Prior to my arrival, the children had been taught to stand up and shout out answers as a group. While there, I modeled individual and small group work. While working in small groups, I saw children begin to smile and become more confident in their pronunciation

and comprehension. They would enthusiastically raise their hands, hoping I would call on them. They seemed excited to be interacting and engaged throughout the day.

Figure 5. Children working in pairs.

During this time I also had the opportunity to conduct conversations with parents, administrators, and teachers in the school. I traveled to Phnom Penh to have additional conversations with research partners mentioned above. The development and content of my research questions for my conversations follow below.

Research Questions

When I learned that I would be conducting conversations with educational administrators as well as teachers and parents (which had been my original idea), I felt that I needed to modify my guiding questions. Prior to my trip, I developed a second set of guiding questions that I used with my partners who were directly involved in the education system. The purpose of the modified questions was to gain insight on the state of education from a professional standpoint, as well as to understand my partners' personal educational experiences and beliefs. Because my questions were guides for conversations, they were not always the precise questions asked during the sessions. Due

to the nature of conversation, dialogue evolves as participants speak, and may not follow a specific format.

My two sets of research-guiding questions were:

Original:

- Please describe your experience growing up in Cambodia. How might this experience have been different if you were growing up there today?
- As a transplanted New Yorker, I often think about what I consider "home." Do Cambodians feel the same? Does the idea of "home" have any relation to your identity?
- What stories are being passed down by those in the Cambodian generation that survived the revolution of the 1970s?
- Are Cambodians worried about the future of their country, or do they feel safe?
- How do they feel about the safety and the education of their children?

Modified for administrators who work directly in education:

- Please tell me what it was like growing up in Cambodia.
- Can you describe the education system that was in place at that time?
- How is the education system different today (assuming it is)?
- Can you talk about your vision for the future of Cambodia, including education?

Data Analysis and Text Creation

Critical hermeneutics permits interpretation and understanding through discourse, text creation, text analysis, and the appropriation of new worlds through interpretation of the text. Herda (1999:127) writes that "text enables us to communicate with each other as researchers in a profession, as researchers in concert with participants, and as readers of the text over time." Data analysis for this research followed the protocol for interpretive participatory inquiry delineated by Herda (1999) as outlined below:

- Research categories serve to guide the conversation with the anticipation that some of the initial categories may be altered as new understandings emerge from the research process.

- Transcription of each taped conversation in order to fix the discourse.

- Examination of the transcriptions. Identification of significant statements in light of the theoretical framework of critical hermeneutics.
- Opportunities provided for follow-up conversations with participants and other contacts.
- Further review of the texts and other data to look for groupings of themes and sub-themes within each category.
- Identification of new understandings that emerged for the participants and the researcher as a result of participation in the research process.
- Review of the data for emerging implications for organizational leadership and for topics that might merit further research.

After recording all conversations with my research partners, they were then transcribed into text. Once they were all in text, I was able to commence the data analysis.

I used both a description and theory to present and analyze the data in Chapter Five, telling the story of the participants and then interpreting it from the critical hermeneutic perspective. This analysis involves a deep level critique and interpretation, which allows new understandings to emerge and new possibilities to be revealed. Implications arose for a new way of being for leaders and for policy makers in organizational development. Additionally, ideas for further research were revealed in the final data analysis.

Distanciation from this text was an important step in this data analysis and the essential to the appropriation of new futures in the critical hermeneutic orientation. According to Ricoeur (1981), once a text has been written there is no longer a world behind the text; all that remains is the world in front of the text. The author's original intention is no longer present; there is only the interpretation by the reader that leads the reader to new understandings. Ricoeur (1981:143) states that, "to begin with, appropriation is dialectically linked to the distanciation characteristic of writing . . .

Thanks to distanciation by writing, appropriation no longer has any trace of affective affinity with the intention of the author."

In this interpretive research, the first text creation came from transcribing the ten conversations I had with my research partners. This fixed text allowed me to distance myself from the conversations. Herda (1999:127) states that in the process of transcribing, "the discourse is fixed in writing; the speakers are separated from what they said. This is part of the distanciation process. The meaning of what is said surpasses the event of saying." My personal journal offered an additional source of data for my analysis. In writing down the ideas and reflections that emerged from my conversations, my visits to museums and libraries, and my observations, I developed an additional source of data in the form of a text. Writing down my thoughts allowed me to distance myself from my own thoughts. The text of the conversation transcriptions and the text of my reflective journal both provided powerful data from which I gleaned new understandings and imagined new futures.

The second textual creation occurred in this study when I "selectively present[ed] from the transcription texts a story about the issue at hand, drawing quotes to ground the narrative" (Herda 1999:127). Once the conversation had been transcribed, my analysis—the narrative of the important parts of the data—became its own text. Herda (1999:86) states that "the task remains to make the text one's own after the act of distanciation takes place. This subsequent act is one of appropriation—an interpretive event." My analysis of the transcribed text allowed me to interpret how I had come to understand Cambodian culture, as well as to appreciate and re-imagine its education system.

The third textual creation (Chapter Five) occurred as I explored connections between the narrative of the conversation and critical hermeneutic theory, which grounded my data analysis in a theoretical foundation. Creating a narrative from a hermeneutic perspective allowed me to glean differing perspectives of my research partners' conversations. Applying hermeneutic theory allowed overarching universal ideas to emerge from the text of the individual conversations.

Text creation and interpretation of the data represent two key aspects of this interpretive research. The texts enable distanciation, allowing me to appropriate new meanings and understandings and imagine new futures from them. As the researcher, I brought preconceptions to the research; by approaching them with an openness to new ideas, the act of interpretation resulted in a fusion of horizons in both myself and my research partners, as discussed in Chapter Five. The next section summarizes the results of my pilot study.

Pilot Study

My pilot study partner, William Ley, is a refugee from Cambodia who now lives in Oakland. During our conversation (full transcription can be found in Appendix A) at the Khmer Buddhist Monk Temple in Oakland on November 8, 2007, we discussed how he survived the killing fields, the identity and culture of Cambodians, and the education system in Cambodia. The three categories that emerged from this discussion were Cambodians' ideas of home and identity, changing culture through a fusion of horizons, and imagining a brighter future for the children of Cambodia. I then analyzed our conversation using these themes; this helped to provide a framework from which I developed guidelines for my research. The complete data analysis can be found in

Appendix A.

The data analysis that resulted from conversation with my research partner followed a series of steps that enabled me to come away from the text with a new understanding of my data. Herda (1999:127) states that "a deeper plot is discovered in a third text utilizing the second text and the critical hermeneutic literature in which narration reveals an order that is more than the actual events and conversations in the research." After taping my conversations, I transcribed the data, which created a text for analysis.

While reading the conversation transcription, I pulled out significant statements, developed themes, and placed them into three categories: narrative identity, fusion of horizons, and imagination. In order to substantiate the categories and themes, I found meaningful quotes from my research partner's conversation. I read through the conversation text several times to ensure that my themes were representative data. On occasion, some themes fit into more than one category, i.e. fusion of horizons and imagination. By discussing my analysis using theories developed by Ricoeur, Gadamer, and Kearney, I was able to discuss the research problem at a theoretical level and provide insight into the implications offered by the discussions that provided new insight and new direction for the research issue under investigation. The implications helped me to discern aspects of my study that merited further study. The next section describes the journal I kept to capture my thoughts as I carried out my research project.

Keeping a Journal

In order to document my thoughts and experiences during my first trip to Southeast Asia in May 2007, I kept a journal and have continued to write in it. In this

journal I recorded my notes from informal conversations with people I encountered, as well as anecdotal observations of my travels. As colleagues gave me suggestions, I also recorded these in my journal. My research topic, which has evolved since I first arrived at USF, is documented in this journal, as well as the many lessons and revelations I have had since beginning my journey as a doctoral student.

The use of a journal throughout my trips to Asia, especially during the data collection trip in May, was a source of inspiration for me. When times were difficult in Battambang, I could look back on all the positive things I had experienced so far. When I was feeling overwhelmed with ideas and lacked direction, I was able to look back at my notes and gain some clarity about my work and my plan. This note-taking was a result of carrying a notebook with me at all times, including in the classrooms at the Rotary school; at night in bed; and on visits to libraries, museums, and the killing fields.

This journal was important because it has allowed me to reflect on my ideas, my prejudices, my mistakes, and my vision, which had many implications for my research. My journal continued to hold my ideas, information, and thoughts on analysis out my research. Moreover, it served as a source of data. The next section will provide a background of the researcher and assess the appropriateness of the use of a critical hermeneutic approach for this study.

Background of the Researcher

A transplanted New Yorker, I have lived in San Francisco for over 18 years. There are still many occasions when I ask myself, "what is my home? Is home San Francisco, where I have lived for many years, where I have a large social network, a history of work, and an active lifestyle? Or is it New York, where I grew up and where

my large family resides, where I go when I want to feel close to my culture, traditions, origins, and identity?

I struggle with my identity. When I think of my identity when I am in New York, I am an assertive, "take-charge" person. When I think about my San Francisco identity, I realize that I have let go of many of my fast-paced activities, and tend to focus more on the outdoors and the spiritual side of life. Both of these tendencies make up my identity, but it can sometimes be disconcerting for me when I attempt to understand who I am. This study of home and identity in Cambodia helped me to understand my own ideas on the subject.

Growing up as the oldest of thirteen children meant that my parents could not afford to pay for college. In addition, my father, a well-educated, traditional Italian, felt that a college education was wasted on girls because their future was limited to marrying and having children. As an adult, I understand how easy it is for children not to pursue education if they are not encouraged or supported by family. My struggles to achieve my own educational goals, as well as my advocacy for my younger siblings, provided a personal basis of action regarding the importance of education that has translated into the professional interests and academic topics that I have pursued.

In addition to working hard to provide myself an education, I have also endured suffering in my life. Although it cannot compare to the killing fields, watching my father lose a painful battle to cancer at a young age was a significant loss for me. It has taken me years of reflection to understand his views, his intentions, his suffering, and my own selfishness. It is only since I traveled to Cambodia and learned of the killing fields that I have been able to put my suffering in perspective. For this reason, I believe that the

critical hermeneutic approach will continue to help me reflect on my life, so that I can plan for my own better future as well as plan for a better future for others who might be less fortunate than myself.

Figure 6. Researcher interacting with children at lunch.

CHAPTER V

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

More than any other natural resource or commodity, childhood is the most valuable asset a society can maintain. War never fails to destroy it, whether a child is facing or holding a weapon (Briggs 2005:xvi).

Introduction

Cambodia is in a state of abject poverty and great economic disparity due to its history of war, revolution, and the genocide perpetuated by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge during the 1970s. Thirty years later, Cambodia is left with a generation of uneducated people in need of psychological support (Roasa 2007:8). Due to the brutal murders, attempted brainwashing of prisoners, and the use of children as soldiers, many Cambodians are too psychosocially distraught to talk about their past experiences, too poor to provide their children with the education needed to break the cycle of poverty, and unable to forgive and move past the injustices they endured under the Khmer Rouge. This has created a generation of middle aged people who have many obstacles to overcome in order to bring about a brighter future for their children. That essential change includes creating and making educational policy decisions.

All my research participants suffered physically or psychologically from the turmoil and revolution in the 1970s. Along with the rest of their generation, they were subjected to watching the death of loved ones, starvation, massive killing, brainwashing, and often torture. The implications of the horror they endured thirty years again continues to affect them. Honwana (2006:105) who describes the ongoing effects of war on soldiers, effects that could well be applied to all Cambodians who were alive during that time. " [An individual] can become insane because there [in the war] many things

happened, seeing the blood of others; carrying dead bodies; killing….When [the affected individual] comes back to the village….those things haunt him in his sleep, he dreams of things that took place in the war." While an entire generation carries this burden, my conversations with my Cambodian research partners indicate that they rarely discuss the past and, as a group, are having trouble retelling their memories to the next generation. Herda (1999:72) writes of the importance of doing so, for "it is in conversations with speakers oriented to reaching understanding that the validity claims are raised – that there is the possibility of telling our story of the past and evaluating it." The failure to evaluate that period by talking about it, retelling it, and learning about it affects Cambodian decisions and policy making today in ways that has ongoing future implications.

Those who survived the killing fields carry a responsibility to speak out and create an awareness about what happened so it will never happen again. In doing so, they allow the possibility for conversations in which "we evaluate ourselves and others, we tell and retell our story, we see the past, and we pose possibilities for the future" (Herda 1999:72). Further, through telling stories about it, they learn to forgive, which is essential. Neither the survivors of the Khmer Rouge nor their children will have true freedom to move forward into a better future unless they can acknowledge the past and forgive what has happened to them. The process of reinterpreting the past to derive meaning from it will allow Cambodians to project a different future for the many areas that they must act today, including educational reform.

Educational reform and imagination about future possibilities played a role in each conversation I held during my research. While I was sitting in the office of Dr.

Thavin Pak, the Director General of Higher Education in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, he proudly showed me an award hanging on his wall that had been presented to him from the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. Pak described the recognition, saying "I got this letter from the Chancellor of Berkeley saying that I was the unsung hero of the teaching staff." During our conversation he explained how he had survived the killing fields, escaped to the United States, become a professor at Berkeley, and then returned to his native Cambodia to serve his country. As he told his story, he spoke of the importance of his culture, his identity, his loyalty to his country, and his desire to bring about positive change for the children of Cambodia, saying, "I strongly believe that education is the only medicine to cure social issues and family issues and we have to fight for education for all."

As the Director General of Higher Education, Dr. Pak is able to change the lives of children in his country. His passion for improving children's lives was evident as he spoke of his to desire not only to improve the quality and access of education for all, but also to involve Cambodia in education on a global level. Most of my research participants expressed the same feelings and concerns.

Examining the strong concerns these people express for their country provided rich data that are presented in this Chapter in terms of my research categories. This narrative analysis takes its orientation from Ricoeur's concept of narrative identity; Gadamer's concept of the fusion of horizons; and Kearney's theory of imagination. Interpreting the narrative from these perspectives framed my understanding of how the Cambodians find themselves in the desperate situation they face and how the future of education could be different for their children.

The data offered an understanding of what Cambodians have been through in the past, how they see life going forward, and what they are currently doing to plan for a better future. The interpretation provided language that will orient educators in Cambodia in providing a more satisfactory education to Cambodia's children so that these children can lead more prosperous, successful lives. In addition this text carries implications that may allow educators to alleviate some of the disparity that exists between rich and poor, leading to greater equality in educational access for children.

Narrative Identity

Ignorance of the Past

In my conversations, all of my research participants informed me that they were either survivors of the killing fields or had family members who had survived. When I asked the younger people about what their parents or grandparents say about it, the common response was that they do not talk about it much and the explanations about why this was so varied. Many people cannot believe that a genocide of this magnitude occurred in Cambodia among such a peaceful people. This atrocity is different from any other in that Cambodians killed their own people, not in a conflict driven by national interests, but in a pure genocidal event, targeting people of all ages for execution. Chanroath Ra, a teacher in Siem Reap, said that his parents do not want to talk about it because the events hurt them. He acknowledged that when they do talk about it, the discussion usually occurs when they are with others who are their age and likewise lived through the horror. In those conversations, they recall living in terror.

Not only it is difficult for survivors to talk to their children about the killing fields, but it can be difficult for their children to hear their stories. Chanroath, who is in his late twenties, said,

> but like to talk about it to them or to me, the younger generation, sometimes it's kind of, make them feel more hurt, and that's why they don't want to talk about it . . . And sometimes when I feel, like when I heard them talk about that, I feel like I can't stand hearing about that because it's so . . . Yeah, it's so, sometimes I cannot stand listening to them because it's so, like, I feel like, in this world, they should not have something like this happen. To the people! It's so . . . I don't know how to describe it. The pain. That's why they don't talk about it.

Chanroath also said that his peers have a hard time understanding that the killing fields could occur because it does not seem possible that a nation could do such an awful thing to its own people. Sambo Ly echoed this disbelief, saying that the question about how people could engage in such horrors haunts her whenever she is asked to speak about her experience. She said that even during the war, "I couldn't understand the concept. I can understand the Vietnamese— they wait and then they kill all these Cambodian, but to do this to your own people, it's, it's . . . just like a parent do it to a child!" Chanroath reiterated his concern that the younger generation does not fully understand the events that their parents experienced. He expressed it by saying, "but they don't believe. They don't know the Cambodian people kill. The Cambodian people, the same, the same nationality . . . They don't believe that the Khmer Rouge uses the palms, the palms branch with the sharpened edges . . . to kill."

The result of this failure to discuss the past is that the younger generation lacks true understanding of the horrors of this experience because their families do not discuss it in a meaningful way that allows for reinterpretation. This dual barrier of pain remembered and imagined shows that all generations of Cambodians continue to feel the

effects of the killing fields. Survivors have difficulty talking about it because it is too painful to recall and young people have difficulty hearing about it, because it is too painful to imagine. As a result, the younger generation has an incomplete understanding of the events of the 1970s, relying upon disassociated school curriculum to comprehend events that continue to affect their closest relatives to this day.

In order to understand identity it is important to recall the past. The past can be can be acted upon or forgotten. In order to make the future a better place for children in Cambodia, the current generation cannot be ignorant or protected from knowing what happened in the past. In order to heal and forgive, they must consider and understand this history. To do so, Ricoeur uses the concept of mimesis, which he defines as "the imitating or representing of action in the medium of metrical language" (Ricoeur 1984:33). Every action that is expressed in language is represented by either mimesis_1 (the past), mimesis_2 (the present), or mimesis_3 (the future). Without mimesis_1 (the past) there cannot be mimesis_3 (the future) because the future is created based on the past. Ancestors, history, and experiences all provide implications that affect how the future unfolds. For the Cambodians, the revolution of the 1970s has had significant implications on how they live out their future.

Time

Ricoeur's theory of mimesis can be used to understand how traditions and behavior, mimesis_1, can be either saved or forgotten over time. In order to make future action meaningful we must consider the past, what occurred for the Cambodians, and how that continues to affect them to this day. My conversation partners made it clear that even today, Cambodians have a difficult time making sense of the killing fields. Sambo

said that she remains disturbed by the effects that the events of the 1970s continue to have for Cambodians and noted that after every visit to Cambodia, she becomes depressed and cannot sleep because she sees the Cambodian children and the hardships they endure. Given the horrors of the recent past, she finds it especially disturbing to see those in power abusing the poor.

Many Cambodians who survived the killing fields find themselves tangled in a painful web. If they talk about it, it is too painful to relive the memories. If they return home to visit, they find those memories too painful to relive. As a result, they would prefer to not recall the tragedies that occurred. Survivors deal with these issues on a daily basis, and their struggles have implications for everything they do.

During my research, I saw some examples of how powerful this dilemma can be, and though this process would be enhanced by a deeper appreciation of the past, I did see examples of adults using an imagined future or $mimesis_3$ during my focus group with students in the school where I volunteered. Some of the ideas or wishes for the future expressed included the hope that "the school will continue to teach the students and … that their children can do as well as [the principal]." Other questions indicated ambitions for the future, including a question asking whether "after … secondary school … the Rotary [has] plans to send an excellent student to study abroad." These parents, who have survived torture and death, understand that they want a better future for their children in order both to eliminate poverty and to avoid a repetition of the terror that they experienced. However, to build that future and to do so on a national scale, much work needs to be done.

Cambodia as a nation is publicly demonstrating evidence of their understanding of the importance of the past and the role of imagination in order to look ahead to the future. At the Siem Reap Airport, I saw a plaque that was titled, "The World of Human Beings – Imagination." The content read, "Time of Memory – Contemporary Times. After experiencing the inheritance from the past, we move into the here and now. Our time is spoken of as we imagine it based on our individual experience and the perceptions that our journey has left us with. From birth to adulthood – man is born, grows up, acts, remembers, and passes on." This poignant expression of critical hermeneutic thought demonstrates that Cambodia is realizing the importance of past events and wanting to educate the public on the ability to change the future based on their past.

In order to project for the future of their children and understand what it is they want for their children, parents need to anticipate what it will take to bring about the desired result. Gadamer (2006:270) says, "working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed 'by the things' themselves, is the constant task of understanding." Another parent was specific in his aspirations for his child, expressing a desire "that in the future their children can speak English, even if not a good job, just a like a driver for the foreigner, they would earn $200 and then they could support their family." Gadamer's process of understanding, which includes such anticipation, is intuitively understood by these parents, who are using the process of understanding to appropriate a better future for their own children, including a better education.

The current generation of Cambodians who are engaged in the process of understanding and are raising children have all survived the killing fields. They have witnessed death, torture, and brainwashing. Thirty years later they need to come to

understand who they are, what they have been through, and then to think about themselves in terms of their children and how they can bring about change that results in all children receiving an education and being able to rise above poverty. Ricoeur (1992:3) emphasized in clear terms that "from the outset…the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other, that instead one passes into the other." If this current generation can see themselves as their children or as the other, they can feel the urgency to create a plan to bring about a brighter future for the next generation to follow. Considering the past is not a process that requires that they think only of themselves and the pain each has been through, but one that then reappropriates meaning so that a better future can be imagined and created. Ricoeur (1992:21-23) believes that individuals have the ability to act and to suffer, and that such actions are connected to our cognitive processes and our values.

According to Ricoeur (1992:141-145), one understands one's identity through narrative. The narrative form draws very different and sometimes unrelated events or elements together into a plot-structured story, and gives it a temporal span. It is the narrative that unites all of a lifetime's elements. These narratives are made up not only of actions and events, but also of characters or persons. Plots relate the mutual development of a story to a character or set of characters. Every character in a story acts and is acted upon. The narrative's characters can initiate action when one evaluates their doings and sufferings, and reinvents their past, present, and future. After reading or hearing the narrative, an evaluation can be made as to a character's behavior. Ricoeur (1992:141-145) describes the critical hermeneutic method this way by saying that "one evaluates how the person responds when confronted by another living being who is in some need

that the person can address." This explanation of the essential concept of narrative identity applies to the Cambodians, who have such clear needs to address in order to improve conditions for their children.

A narrative about human persons tells of the connections that unify multiple actions over a span of time. "The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character" (Ricoeur 1992:147-48). Lin, the Rotary School principal, exemplified this when she discussed her ideas on the implications of the past on the identity of younger Cambodians. She said, for example, that an emerging Cambodian identity is tied to language, for many younger Cambodians are making an effort to learn a different language. She said that "the Cambodian identity is a result of learning English. English is very popular for Cambodians. Many people learn other languages like Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean. [However,] old people don't care about learning a new language." She explained that the differences in generations – the narrative identity that each chooses – is also demonstrated with regard to marital choices, for "the culture for marrying is changed also. People want to choose their partner. Cambodian women usually marry around 18-19 years old. My parents wanted to choose my husband and they asked me if they could and I told them I wanted to choose my own. I am still single [she is approximately 30] and they are not very happy about it." While this is a specific example, it demonstrates the seeds of change that are blossoming in Cambodia. They will grow faster and in a direction more firmly rooted in ethics when storytelling is further embraced, as this will release those stories from the boundaries of the past and allow them to be reappropriated in meaningful ways.

As a result of my interactions and conversations with the Cambodians, I experienced Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity as it applies on an individual as well as a community level. Evidence of this sense of community occurred on my last day at the school, when the student body came together and put on a farewell show for me and gave me gifts. Ricoeur (1988:247) notes that "the notion of narrative identity also indicates its fruitfulness in that it can be applied to a community as well as to an individual. We can speak of the self-constancy of a community, just as we spoke of it as applied to an individual subject. Individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history." In a conversation with Yim Piehnirorth (Niroth), an NGO employee and former teacher, he expressed his feelings on the importance of narrative. He described how people escaped to Thailand from the Khmer Rouge during the 1970s and connected it to narrative saying that Cambodians, "love all of the border people to take their people, to understand, to know about the language. So, we weren't living in the world of the camp, absolutely. So we have a chance to express, to teach our children." Yim understands the importance of using language to express identity and teach their children about that identity, which would otherwise have been lost in the camps.

Each child, teacher or parent I interacted with gave me an opportunity to hear their individual story and learn about them on an individual level. Through multiple conversations and observations, I was able to hear the narrative identity of a people or community. Although the stories were very different, conversations and interactions with children did help me to understand what struggles they endure, how motivated they are, and how they seem to be happy. As a community, I heard stories about their tragic past

as well as their present and future, which allowed me to see a broader identity of a community over time. It also made me aware of the potential problems posed by the ignorance of the younger generation, who do not have a full understanding of the horrors of the 1970s.

Memories

In order to project desires and actions into the future, the Cambodian people must understand the importance of the past. By considering the past as they look to the future, they can make action in the present meaningful. The painful memories that many Cambodians have affects how they live their lives today, for Ricoeur (1984:52) affirms that how one lives in the present is based on memories and traditions from the past. Ricoeur (1988:234) writes, "the historical present is also based, as are the past and the historical future with which it is in solidarity, on the phenomenon, both biological and symbolic, of the succession of generations." In terms of using critical hermeneutics to interpret data, the historical present will contract and expand as successive generations of Cambodians reflect on the past and imagine a different future. For the Cambodians, as they retell their past and plan and hope for the future, are acting and suffering.

Looking at the past begins with understanding how some atrocities occurred. Lin, the principal explained that

> Pol Pot only brainwashed the children. The children were brainwashed to believe that they could trust no one and that the "anka" or the organization owned everything and provided everything. For example, people were starving and if someone stole some food, no adult would tell the Anka about it. But if a child saw an adult steal food, the child would snitch on the adult and the adult would be executed. Because the child believed that the adult was stealing from the organization that would feed them and take care of them.

Due to this brainwashing, children who were trained as soldiers developed no conscience about choosing which adults should be executed. Their feelings, families, and histories had been either expunged or taken from them. After the war was over, these children had no homes, families, emotions, or skills. These very children are now adults and many have children of their own. Today, they are the generation that takes responsibility for creating educational policy and making appropriate choices on educating their children. Cambodians must come to understand their identity or their self, in order to help their children.

In coming to understand ones self, Cambodians will be able to recognize the sameness that occurs between themselves and their children. According to Ricoeur, (1992:2-4), identity is made up of a link between self-sameness, or *idem*, and a selfhood, or *ipse*. The self's idem-identity gives the self a spatio-temporal sameness—the unique part of us that does not change. The self's ipse-identity provides the unique ability to initiate something new, to innovate, which is instrumental in healing. Without both sorts of identity, there is no self. A comprehensive account of any genuine action must express the way it is related to both of these orders of selfhood (Ricoeur 1992:2-4). Through sameness, we can see how we are similar to others and see ourselves as another or see another as oneself.

This theory of sameness and selfhood was evidenced several times during my conversation with Dr. Pak, Director General of Higher Education of Cambodia. His sameness, the part of us that never changes, is evidenced as he retells his childhood in Cambodia. His selfhood, or the part of him that will change over time, is evidenced as he

talks about his feelings about Cambodian traditions that need to change, or how he changed in order to survive both in Cambodia and the United States.

Dr. Pak, also a survivor of the killing fields, described the implications his identity has for his life and family. He fled to the United States after escaping from Cambodia to start a new life. He started a produce business and put himself through night school, receiving a bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree in the United States. He then became a professor at the University of California at Berkeley, where he taught the Khmer language. After three years of teaching he received a call from his friend, now his employer, advising him to return to his people in Cambodia and take his current position as the Director General of Higher Education. He had settled in California and owned a house and a business; he had two daughters and a wife. Pak felt so strongly about his identity that he took the job offered to him by his friend and returned to his native Cambodia. His wife decided her life was with their daughters in California and did not return with him for the first two years; yet Dr. Pak felt so strongly about his identity and his obligation to his country that he separated his family for two years. One way one can come to understand Dr. Pak's strong association with his identity was through narrative and the use of emplotment.

An important piece of narrative identity is emplotment (Ricoeur: 1984:168). It creates the transition between narrating and explaining. By placing or emplotting the events of our lives in a specific place in time, we can make sense of who we are. Once we understand who we are, we can then begin to understand others. By telling their stories, elder Cambodians can understand who they are, and they realize that their identity is

reliant upon their telling and retelling their survival stories, and then translating that into educating children.

Dr. Pak considered his past and imagined what the future could hold, and he reinvented himself through narrative. This process allowed him to take appropriate action that benefited him as well as others. By seeing others as ourselves, we can be concerned for them and come to understand their suffering. The happiness of others also becomes important. Seeing oneself as another takes time.

Sambo Ly, Program Manager for The Refugee Health Program in Oakland, described how painful it is to retell her past when she must speak publicly at work. She explained that she panics and cannot speak because she remembers her experience in the killing fields, where the only way to stay alive was to be silent. She said, "the experience in the Pol Pot [period] is that being silent is the only way to keep you alive. So, you know, to change from that to become someone that speaks freely [is difficult]." She went on to explain that she finds it especially difficult when she sees authority figures and individuals with higher education; she becomes frightened. She was taught to bow to authority figures and never to challenge their ideas or recommendations. She concludes that "it's really tough for me. After 20-something years in the U.S., I still could not overcome that fear and to speak freely in public."

As this example shows, for many survivors of the killing fields, the present remains informed by the past so that even an innocuous work situation becomes a dreaded event. In many western organizations, employees are encouraged to work as a team; companies start meetings with "ice-breaker" activities so that employees can get to know one another. Someone who has lived in the rice camps for four years would have a

difficult time discussing their past or sharing a personal "tidbit" about which others are unaware. Sambo went on to explain her situation: she has a new boss, and each month he tries to have one person on the team talk about their life. They call it the "five-minute spotlight." This spotlight put Sambo in an uncomfortable position, because although she wants to be part of the team and do what her boss asks of her, she also has trouble sharing her painful past. Her past was, in essence, laid waste. All of her personal belongings were taken and destroyed. She lost her entire family to the killing fields except for one sister. Her pain was evident when she said, "when I think about myself, I have no picture of my childhood; my library [of pictures and personal items] starts again in 1979, you know, that's when I start a new life. Or, I should say, I was reborn. Whatever before that, it's nothing." As her story suggests, her identity disappeared in 1975, when Pol Pot took power, and re-emerged in 1979, when Pol Pot was overthrown.

Ricoeur's theory of identity (1992:140-151) asserts that one needs to be able to organize events into a narrative that becomes one's story and identity. Trying to understand more about her feelings and how difficult it is for her to speak about her past, I asked whether she thought her boss or her coworkers would understand the difficulty she has in talking about her past and whether they realize the pain it involves. She responded that she thought they understood, but she also said that she thought that these situations provide a good opportunity for her to share what had happened to her so that everyone would understand why she is so quiet. By speaking about her past and telling her story, she could fully embrace her narrative identity.

As human beings we have the ability and the responsibility to live a life that is not only good for ourselves, but good for others. During my parent focus group; one father

expressed his gratitude for the generous acts the school was bestowing on its families. He said "thank you to the school even though [I do] not know who is the owner of the school. Thank you for providing ten kilo bag of rice to students who have perfect attendance and some clothes and that nothing can compare to these valuable things." Ricoeur (1992:172) reflects on these concepts, noting "let us define ethical intention as aiming at the "good life" with and for others, in just institutions" (Ricoeur 1992:172). The Rotary Elementary school in Battambang is an example of a community that is taking responsibility and aiming to live a life that is good with and for others, which makes up their identity.

In order to live a life that is good for others, we need to fully understand the others' needs and desires, and not merely project our own wants and desires upon them. At a conference in Siem Reap, Cambodia in 2008, keynote speaker Peter Hammer said, "our views about development, as well as our perceptions of the "other," are constructed within the context of our own society." Our nature is to see what someone else needs according to our view of what is best; this is based on the context of our own lives. In order to help others, however, we must allow them to reflect on their past, their culture, their traditions, and their needs from their point of view, not ours.

During the reign of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodians did not explain, contemplate, or reflect about their identity, their culture or who was at fault for the killings; in fact, to do so could have been deadly. Yim Piehnirorth (Niroth) said

> They [Khmer Rouge] never taught this is your parents, you have to respect, follow them because they are very old, very wise, have experience, no they never… [instead, they would suggest] your mother, your friend, they steal something, this is your enemy, not your mother. They teach children a very bad way, unmorality [immoral], and they make the people not trust each other, not

> build a good relationship, and they say that, especially they say that, the monk is the bloodsucker.

Ricoeur (2004:460) writes, "there can, in fact, be forgiveness only where we can accuse someone of something, presume him to be or declare him guilty." Yim describes placing blame on the Khmer Rouge for teaching children immoral thoughts against their families and religious people. He demonstrates forgiveness in his actions, first by becoming a teacher for twelve years and now by working for an NGO. His healing forgiveness has thus allowed him to help others.

Depending on experiences, history, prejudices, and biases by retelling the past is not easily done. It can be painful and complicated. Unlike Yim, I learned that many Cambodians choose not to discuss the past because of this pain. However, they are eager to discuss the future. Ricoeur (1988:234) writes, "the historical present is also based, as are the past and the historical future with which it is in solidarity, on the phenomenon, both biological and symbolic, of the succession of generations." The narrative of the past and past generations influences living and action in the present. Ricoeur and Kearney both say that it is critical to retell and remember the past in order to plan for the future and live a meaningful life.

Cambodians consider themselves fortunate to have survived the turmoil of the 1970s, a period during which the Cambodian nation killed its own people. Unless one has experienced such loss and terror, I wonder whether one could understand the complexity or the severity of these memories. Still, they continue to struggle to remember and reappropriate those events in a way that supports imagination about the future.

In listening to Cambodians retell their stories I heard them talk about how the past, and their tragic experiences or those of their parents, have shaped their identity individually and as a people. From their stories I gleaned what a humble, generous, and thankful people they are. They take nothing for granted. Life is precious to them, and they will do everything they can to help themselves and others. This kindness to others is what drew me to the Cambodian people: throughout my trip, people who barely knew me went out of their way to share the little that they had or to make me feel more comfortable.

Memories are foundational for the many Cambodians who survived the killing fields and, as a result, feel strongly about preserving their culture by teaching the younger generations. Yim described how young children who grew up next to the Thai border during the killing fields did not know their own culture. He describes how the Khmer Buddhist Association (KBA) helped to teach Khmer children at the Thai border about the Buddhist way, and how they taught the children English and literature in order to keep Cambodian traditions alive. They did this because the young children in the camps had no idea what it meant to be Cambodian. Some children born at the border never knew anything other than the friends and acquaintances at the border who protected them from people on the outside. He explained how he eventually became a teacher because of this situation, saying

> so this is a problem. So, the purpose of the education of the KBA was to provide the knowledge to a young generation in the camp to understand their own language, their traditions and culture, their religions, and also especial language is English, in order to make communication with outside, in order to exchange the experience or in order to have a better life in the future time. So I became the teacher.

By grounding his understanding of the past in action, Yin models the effort that other Cambodians must make in order to understand past events and then to reappropriate them in a way that allows for forgiveness, healing, and imagination about a better future.

Fusion of Horizons

Educational Reform

A fusion of horizons may occur through conversation that leads to a greater understanding of the person's views, cultures, traditions, suffering, etc. Gadamer (2006:271) writes, "all that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or text." When I first started talking to Cambodians about the education system, everyone spoke of the corruption in the schools. When I returned from my trips to Cambodia and thought about the salaries of the teachers and the conditions under which they work, however, I realized that the phenomenon is not corruption, but a matter of survival. This reflection has helped me to come to a fusion of horizons in understanding the desperation that public school teachers face in order to survive.

Public school teachers in Cambodia do not earn enough to survive if they tried to live only on their teaching salaries. Sokun Phuong, a university professor, said that public school teachers earn $20 a month, and that no one can survive on that amount of money. Teachers must earn money from other jobs in order to supplement their small income.

One of the ways teachers earn extra money is by forcing children to take private lessons after school. Chanroath Ra confirmed the low compensation and the need to earn extra income and also described the private lesson system. He said that teachers earn 5,000–10,000 riel ($5-$10) a month. As a result of this low pay, they explain a lesson to

children in the classroom for between five and fifteen minutes, and then they stop. The students cannot learn adequately from such brief instruction, so they are forced to pay for private classes to continue their learning. The teachers also sell handouts of the lessons to the students, some of them incomplete and not all of them containing the same information.

Chanroath Ra, a teacher trainer, described how this desperate situation is beginning to change. He said that beginning in 2002, NGOs have tried to educate primary school teachers about the problems inherent in their teaching strategies and help raise levels of compensation, thereby improving the quality of education. Dr. Pak confirmed the existence of the practice of forcing children to pay for private classes and selling handouts and materials to students. As he explained it,

> teachers do not receive enough pay or salary to support their family, or support themselves, so they try if possible when they can to raise income and money for their family, and unfortunately some teachers ask students to pay for the copies of all the teaching materials and also to go to private school [lessons] in order to pass the exam and things of that nature.

Dr. Pak explained that the Ministry of Education is aware of the practice and is working hard to eliminate it. One way this is being accomplished is by raising the salaries of primary school teachers. Although it is a slow process because of the difficulty of appropriating funds for education, he reported that the Ministry will keep working at trying to eliminate this practice of limiting education to those who can pay for it. He reports, "the Ministry of Education is working so hard to reduce those kind of issues or to eliminate them, again the thing with power and the capability and the capacity to do it, but we keep on doing it." Kimlin Ley confirmed that the government is also stressing the importance of education. She said, "the government is trying to announce on TV or in

the villages about the importance of staying in school. They are asking parents to let children stay in school." According to Kimlin, the national statistic is that approximately 20 percent of students leave school by the sixth grade.

Most children who quit do so because they must work to earn money to help support their families. However, private schools and NGOs are trying to be creative and come up with incentives for children to stay in school. Kimlin explained her school is trying to motivate parents to keep their children in school by "giving out awards of bags of rice to students who have perfect attendance each month. We are trying to encourage families to keep their children in school and not let them miss days by working. Families feel that by missing a day or two is not a big deal." This desire on the part of the government and private schools to keep children in school is the philosophy that is helping to bring about change in Cambodia. If the government can spread the word that education is the way to alleviate poverty and make the nation viable again, that belief will trickle down to parents. As a result, more children will remain in school and receive the education they desperately need and want.

Finding solutions to the problems in the educational system is something in which Dr. Pak, the Director General believes strongly. Dr. Pak described Cambodia's need to create an inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to receive an education. As he goes out into the countryside, he has been telling poor families who have many children and cannot afford to offer all of them an education to send at least one to school. He explained that once given the opportunity and the necessary tools, any child can better his or her situation. Dr. Pak went on to say,

> yes, and I also believe that children are smart and they just [do not] unfortunately have opportunity to go to school. And once they made it to school, they are

> provided the necessary tools to go further. So they are unfortunate to be born in the poor families, to be born in the rural areas, to be born in areas where there is no education for them. That is the one issue. If we can provide all the tools, then they can achieve their dreams and finish their education.

Affirming this perspective about the importance of education, Sambo Ly described how her mother made sure that she and her siblings received an education, comparing her mother's commitment to the experiences of other children who could not go to school due to a lack of financial means. She said, "I know some of the kid who, their parent are farmer, they might be required to go to the farm and work. Instead of going to school. Or they are all selling stuff in the market, you know, they don't have any choice but, or . . . to take care of their younger siblings." When children are not given the opportunity to receive an education due to economics or family circumstances, they are destined to continue the cycle of poverty that has plagued their families for many years.

A large gap exists between the lifestyles and expectations of children whose parents have been educated and have college degrees and children whose parents are rural farmers. Kimlin grew up in a middle-class family in which both parents were educated. She described her parents' perspective and compares educated and non-educated parental expectations, saying that her parents "just feel that education is important because, if you want to earn your own living, you need education. You cannot use… [your name] to work, to earn money. So for some well-educated, middle-class family, they feel education is important, but for the poor family, they just care about how to get money for eating today."

While listening to the research participants' stories, I started to consider the differences between the philosophies of the western and the eastern world, and wondered

whether such ruminations were appropriate. Western perspectives situate formal education as the cornerstone of success in life. Is the western perspective appropriate for nations that have survived on little to no formal education for centuries? Now the western school of thought is trickling into nations that have never embraced this philosophy, but are desperate and feel that they must do so in order to survive.

This value applies also to other differences between the experiences of Cambodians who survived the killing fields and the typical job applicant in a western country. Western expectations about past experiences and how those indicate future success may simply be irrelevant to Cambodians who lived through the killing fields. For example, a refugee like Sambo, who survived the killing fields and is determined to make a better life for herself, has a perspective different from that of most applicants in the west. The western corporate policy of having applicants take a lie detector test is one of several ways in which the western way of doing business makes it difficult for people like Sambo to get a job. She explained that during her teenage years, she was in the rice camps, just trying to stay alive, being tortured, starved, and brainwashed. Though this experience led to her confidence that when she came to the states she could do anything, when she applied for her first job as a cashier, she was told she would need to take a lie detector test. She described the event, saying that

> the experience that I get from the war, the strength, the, the struggle that I have to go through, what I have to do to stay alive . . . I told them straight out that I am in the war, I took food because there was no food and I had to steal food, so I am not going to pass your test or whatever. So I just told them straight out, this is where I come from, and I did steal before, I steal food. So, I am not going to pass your test if you ask me, did you ever steal, you know.

This determination and strength exemplifies the strength of character and identity that many Cambodians feel. Many feel very lucky to be alive after having watched most

of their family perish. Having escaped death during the 1970s, they feel that they can survive anything.

This experience of survival and belief in their capacity to do so in the future has not been understood in a way that is entirely aligned with a western perspective about the value of education. After reflecting on my conversations, I have come to understand that many Cambodians who live in rural areas simply do not think education is important. My realization was confirmed by the principal, Lin, who said, "for Cambodian, their feeling is that they don't have education, so they don't think about the future, you see? They don't think about the futures, they just want to earn for the day, day by day." Gadamer (1976:94) asserts that "hermeneutically enlightened consciousness seems to me to establish a higher truth in that it draws itself into its own reflection." Reflections on the past, learning from it, and reappropriating it may open the possibility that rural Cambodians will develop new understandings. Doing so is critical to imagine a future profoundly different from the way in which they live now.

In conclusion, educational reform offers an opportunity for others to experience a fusion of horizons, exchanging a critical view of teachers as corrupt with an understanding of the challenges that teachers experience. Sokun's experience of an education where he had to learn on his own because the teachers did not teach during class time epitomizes this opportunity, for he came to understand how it is necessary for teachers to try to earn extra money to survive. Sokun said, "not enough [salary]! Because I think that we cannot live with that money because teacher have to spend a lot money on thing. So they have to earn like [more money] from other things. I hope when they get more money they will try more, better." When thinking about the very low salary

teachers earn, he came to an understanding of why teachers do not teach. They need to try to earn extra money from children during class time by selling materials and holding back instruction so children will pay for private lessons. However, instead of being bitter, he let go of his prejudices and his past to come to an understanding of the suffering of teachers and their predicament. In doing so, he provides a model that could help others to begin the conversations that are necessary for real reform.

Forgiveness and Healing

If we can remain open to achieving an understanding of another's point of view, of their culture, of their suffering, forgiveness and healing may begin. The suffering that comes from retelling the atrocities of the past will serve as a promise to make changes for the future and an understanding of others and of what has happened. As part of retelling their stories, they must understand both the details and how they relate to the whole. Gadamer (2006:291) says, "the harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding. The failure to achieve this harmony means that understanding has failed." During lunch time at the Battambang school, I played soccer with the children in 100 degree plus temperatures and they were delighted and happy to have my attention. On May 17, I wrote in my journal, "they [children] loved it. I could see the joy in their faces. They did not want to stop." Although two weeks is not enough time to gain a true understanding of the other, it did provide me an opportunity to come to a new understanding of what the Cambodians have been through, of their rich culture, of their suffering, and how their children are just like our children. As a citizen and lifetime resident of the United States, I have never been subjected to an event where I lost many family members or almost died from starvation. Therefore spending time in Cambodia,

having conversations with my research partners, and interacting with children at the Rotary school helped me better understand how difficult it must be to be able to forgive and heal from such a tragedy.

Gadamer (2006:291) notes that the anticipation of meaning comes when the parts are understood in relation to the whole. He points out that it is similar to learning a language in that one needs to construe a sentence before one can understand the parts. He adds that "the process of construal is itself already governed by an expectation of meaning that follows from the context of what has gone before" (Gadamer 2006:291). G. L. Lee wrote in a book edited by Dith Pran (1996:109),

> I often wonder why the Khmer Rouge leaders are not brought to trial in the International Court of Law. How much longer must the Cambodian people endure the pains of today and mourn the loss of yesterday? Aren't two and a half decades of war and hunger enough? Cambodians must stop killing Cambodians and Cambodia for the sake of power, personal gain and ideology.

This demonstrates that present day Cambodians are still suffering and have not been able to forgive what has happened to them in the past, which is part of the whole. By constructing each of the parts, Cambodians need to see each event as part of what Lee describes as both personal gain and associated with the ideology of their nation. Finally bringing the Khmer Rouge leaders to trial may help Cambodians to forgive their nation for the torture and killing they endured and the ongoing problems that endure today.

While volunteering at the Rotary School in Battambang and living in the small jungle village for two weeks, I grew to better understand what the struggles and obstacles poor families face on a daily basis and how they can work toward forgetting and forgiveness. Ricoeur (2004:241) explains "it is, more precisely, the selective function of the narrative that opens to manipulation the opportunity and the means of a clever

strategy of forgetting as much as in a strategy of remembering…." Chen Saordeut, a professor, explained how, despite his past, he moved on to become an educator. He said, "what motivated us to be educators? Because of [our] experiences. We have had a lot of bad experiences. And all of these bad experiences just… leave our mind. We had the others, children… our society. All the reasons it can lead us to be educators." The act of forgetting bad experiences has allowed Chen to forgive and forget and think about how he can change the future for children.

In order to forgive, it is the responsibility of the generation that survived to speak out and create awareness so that atrocities like this will not occur again. Yim said, "I can share my experience to my students and let them avoid what is the bad and what is the good and what can bring happiness or peace or prosperity." Herda (1999:10) writes, "when we are able to reinterpret out past and fuse our horizons with other cultures and traditions, then we may be capable of projecting in a concrete and persuasive manner our interest in freedom." Cambodians must tell their stories in order to forgive and forget. Through forgiveness they will achieve freedom which can provide a brighter future for their children.

By telling stories we are making a connection between history and forgiving. Ricoeur (2004:457) says "forgiveness – if it has a sense and if it exists – constitutes the horizon common to memory, history, and forgetting." This connection was demonstrated by Deng Sophoeurt, the Manager at the Rotary School. During our conversation he sadly described his education as having no books and consisting of having all students write on a single small chalk board. When asked what he hoped for the future of education he said "a brighter future for children, a better future for me and my country, to get a good job

with a high salary, to want to learn to be a good person, to be a good citizen, and to be able to study in the US." Deng was able to retell his past, forgive the circumstances that he was subjected to and come to an understanding of the kind of future he imagines for his country.

In order to heal themselves, Cambodians need to contemplate and reflect on their past. Yim explained, "my dream was cut off, after the Khmer Rouge, no school, no everything." Kearney (1999:27) speaks of the need to understand the past in order to "recreate ourselves in a new future." By becoming a teacher, Yim was able to heal himself by reflecting on his past experience, ensuring that other children would not endure the horrors that he did and imagine a better future for them.

Through forgiveness and healing, Cambodians might be able to move on and plan for a brighter future for their children and make policy decisions that provide opportunities for all children to receive an education. Hearing and visualizing the possibilities for a better education for their children after healing and forgiveness would enable them to interpret the mistakes of the past and make a plan for meaningful action for the present that will bring about a brighter future and alleviate the abject poverty they have endured.

Imagination

Solicitude

The aftermath of war creates the need to address the needs of children who were affected by war, whether their participation involved carrying guns and killing, being displaced from their villages, orphaned, denied access to education, or directly abused, sexually or otherwise. They are all victims. The first step in addressing the effects of war

is imagine an approach toward the victims that includes an orientation toward solidarity, which Ricoeur defines as the willingness to care for and stand up for another. It is our ability to care for another by transferring how the other person must feel unto ourselves in order to try to comprehend how the other feels. Solicitude or caring for the well being of another teaches "through the transfer of the other onto ourselves, the irreplaceable character of our own life" (Ricoeur 1992:193).

Through advocacy for people who are less fortunate than ourselves and to the effort of understanding what they are going through, we are transferring the character of our own life to benefit another human being. Malis Phoun, a physician, described how as a doctor she is advocating on behalf of people less fortunate than herself. She said, "I, I just, I know, this week I went to assessment related to school, we have school 50 program for the primary school. We give food, we give rice, bean, vegetable… for the community to cook for student who are come to school without feed anything. So we bring food for the remote area school." Such solicitude "adds the dimension of value, whereby each person is irreplaceable in our affection and our esteem" (Ricoeur 1992:193). Malis demonstrates through her action the societal responsibility we share to advocate on behalf of children. This was the purpose of my research in Battambang.

Action

Coming to understand another culture by spending time with them and living amongst them is a way to understand what they may be going through. It helps to learn about their backgrounds, behaviors, traditions, and beliefs in ways that one cannot learn from history books. Further, understanding the history and beliefs of another culture allows one to become an advocate on another's behalf. As a result of my two week

experience volunteering at the Rotary Elementary School in Battambang, many things became apparent about education as a system as well as on a individual teaching level. In my opinion, not only does the system need to make changes but the ways teachers teach needs to change.

One of the problems with the system in Cambodia is that education appears to be one of the only industries where one does not have to buy their job. This means that anyone (usually poor and under educated) can receive a teaching position Lin described the current system, saying, "when you apply to be a teacher, it's easier because you don't have to pay money to get the position, but if you apply for other… like police officer, other government job, you have to pay money. The bigger job, you have to pay more money to get the position." This practice appears to result in people with less money and less education receiving the available teaching jobs.

While volunteering in Battambang, I worked with the children, teachers and administrators and interacted with the parents. Being immersed in the community for two weeks provided me many opportunities to have interactions and conversations. These interactions included modeling teaching strategies for teachers in the classrooms, reinforcing English pronunciation through conversations with students and teachers, and engaging in dialogues with parents about how proud they were of their children's hard work in school. I also conducted a parent focus group. These interactions and conversations enabled me to learn about the Cambodians traditions, culture, and values.

Through such interactions and conversations, Cambodians have the opportunity to tell and retell their stories and come to understand their past and plan for a future that includes equality for all. Ricoeur (1992:202) writes, "equality is to life in institutions

what solicitude is to interpersonal relations." This theory was embraced by Dr. Pak's proud announcement of the growing accessibility of the school system, thanking "the government and for people in the communities for providing education for the people in order to reduce disparity between rural and urban and gender. We bring school to people's home and to witness higher education. There was only one higher education institution in 1997 and now we have up to 44." To Dr. Pak, these numbers reflect the government's committed action in bringing equality to its institutions by providing free education to all children regardless of economic status. He further described his own commitment to this vision, speaking of the care and equality that he provides by visiting poor families in rural areas, introducing the value of attending school, and making sure that they know what higher education is and that it is available to all. In this way Dr. Pak feels that all people are being treated equally. He said, "I think the government or the Ministry of Education along with the government is doing their best to help all the children, poor and rich to get education."

Ensuring that all children, poor and rich, have access to an education is not an easy problem to solve. One of the main problems in rural areas is that poor families may feel that providing their children with an education is meaningless. According to Sokun, many poor parents feel that education will not improve their lives or their families' lives. He said that

> [for] example, some parent say that study is useless, study is just important for the rich family, the poor family do not have to study because study is meaningless to them. They will be the same as the family because he have an idea that even he get a good education, but he have no money to pay, to pay for the job or to make a corruption or he will not be able to get a good job. That's why poor children do not want to study.

During my two weeks at the Rotary school, I became aware of activities that could promote parent education. This is important because, as of statistics taken in 2006, illiteracy rates in Cambodia ranged from twenty percent in cities to fifty percent in rural areas (Phyrum 2008). In order for children to receive an appropriate education, parents need to realize the importance of keeping their children in school.

Dr. Pak discussed the importance of education as he described how hard he worked to complete his own education, which started in Cambodia and ended when the Khmer Rouge took over. He was forced to start over again when he arrived in the US as a refugee. He explained, "I felt that I was a learner and I knew that I could do it and I had to do the business and school both at the same time… I had to work more than 12 hours a day and still made time to go to school part time. So it took me 15 years to finish the bachelors degree and the masters – very patient, 15 years to be exact." It is important for parents to realize how important education is and that sometimes means educating the parents through different activities.

The ability to act guided by permissions and obstacles is described by Ricoeur (1988: 232-234) as the theory of action, which is the relation of narrative to the practical sphere. The theory of action is comprised of two actions, the basic action, which we do on familiarity, and derived action, which is a consequence of a strategy of action to cause an event. Therefore the consequences of our actions are no longer just objects of observation, for as agents we produce something (Ricoeur 1988:231) as evidenced in my conversation with Yim. He said, "I work hard for… my education and my son education and also to help the community to be better; I embrace the problems that happen in the past and build them in the future."

Derived action was demonstrated in several ways as a result of my trip to Cambodia. In working with teachers, speaking with parents, and working with the children, each group demonstrated by their actions or by their expressed desires their own derived action. As for my own derived action, I modeled teaching strategies being used in the US for Cambodian teachers. I purposely modeled strategies and spoke with teachers about different approaches they might want to try to improve their practice. The consequence of my action could be a change in the pedagogy of a teacher, which could result in helping children in Cambodia receive a more appropriate education.

Dr. Pak spoke of his derived action when he said that he strongly believes "that education is the only medicine to cure social issues and family issues and we have to fight for education for all." As part of derived action the "I can" action and belief of Dr. Pak makes, "the lived present coincide with the particular instant giving present the force of preserving or enduring thereby making it historical in the present (Ricoeur 1988:234). The particular instant is the break between a past that is no longer there and a future that is not yet.

The parents demonstrated their derived actions by their commitment to act and by speaking out. At the parent focus group, one parent said that he "hopes that in the future their children can speak English, even if not a good job, just a like a driver for the foreigner, they would earn $200 and then they could support their family." Ricoeur says (1988:232), "in a broad sense, every speech act (or every act of discourse) commits the speaker and does so in the present… every instance of discourse makes me responsible for what is said in my saying it." Thus, when parents speak they are making a commitment to act.

Through discourse the speaker makes a promise and intentionally places himself responsible for his actions. By speaking out, the parents of the children at the Rotary School are making a promise and committing themselves to do everything they can to provide their children with an education. Ricoeur points out that making a promise is not just saying you will do something, but following the commitment with action: keeping the promise (1988:234). If parents speak out and express their concerns about the state of education and their hopes for the future, then they are not only saying they will do something, but they are making a promise to keep.

Further, by making a promise, the parents are taking that particular instance and making a connection between a past that is no longer there and a future that is not yet, thereby creating a common space of experience. This common space of experience is contracting and expanding depending on the actions of the narrator, the retelling of the past, and the consideration of the possibilities on the horizon. This historical present is where derived action will result in the parents producing something that will benefit their children.

The historical present is made up of a combination of calendar time and joins the lived-through present. It can be seen as being connected with a founding event that opens the door for beginning a new course of events. The reign of the Khmer Rouge from 1975-1979 was a founding event that had such devastating implications that it has changed the way people see the future and has created opportunities for them to make changes for the future. Youkimny Chan, (in Pran 1997:25), who is a survivor of the killing fields who now lives in the US, writes, "as I entered my old neighborhood, my spirit crumbled. My house was burned and my friends' houses were burned. Everything

that had once been so familiar was gone. I knew my life had changed forever." To prevent this from ever happening again, Cambodians need to realize the importance of prioritizing the education of their children, to ensure both their academic readiness and their vigilance against the potential of another realm of terror. Doing so will plant the seeds for a future in which Cambodia rises beyond economic poverty and horrific violence.

Education for Today

In order to reinvent oneself and create a better future, Cambodians needs to understand the past and use imagination to "recreate [themselves] in a new future" (Kearney 1999:27). Yim describes how he felt about learning, comparing it to having a dream. He asserts that, in order to have a dream, one must learn, saying that he understands "that learning is not limited. Learning is . . . I mean, the more you learn, the more you know, so I thought that, if I learn more, I start to understand more I can think out of the box. But before 1975, I just learned what I am learning, but I don't know the proper words for what I want to be . . . My dream was cut off, after the Khmer Rouge—no school, no everything." Yim was brainwashed into forgetting his past, for he was not allowed to attend school, have personal possessions that might remind him of the past, or have contact with his friends and family. As a result, he lost sight of his dreams. It was not until he escaped from the rice camps that he was able to reflect on the past and imagine how the future could be different. His dream included not only educating himself, but educating all the children of Cambodia.

If children are educated they will be able to evaluate the past, and through that experience gain the capacity to make changes that can ensure that the torture their

families endured during the 1970s will never happen again. Children are a nation's future. If a nation fails to educate its children, it is setting itself up to lack leadership and strength that is needed for economic development. This lack of education has left Cambodia in a state of crisis that needs to be addressed. The three little girls pictures below, who are students at the Rotary school, along with many other children, will be forced to drop out of school if Cambodia cannot find a way to make education accessible to children of all economic statuses.

Figure 7. Girls singing at Rotary School

In this Chapter, I use the Rotary School as an example of a school that makes a change in children's lives. Several themes are presented that demonstrate the choices made by the researcher, the administrators, the parents, and the principal of the Rotary school to provide advocacy for Cambodian children. The intent is to present ways to ensure that providing an appropriate education for all children is an integral part of Cambodia's changing society and accepted as a responsibility of each human being.

It is the responsibility of the middle aged generation to accept responsibility to create effective policy for their children. Ricoeur (1984:145) writes, "the study of narrative sentences presents itself as the study of a class of sentences. It establishes the

differentiating feature of historical knowledge and, in this sense, provides a minimal characterization of history." By speaking through narrative, parents will be able to differentiate between the knowledge of the past, provide an understanding of history, and come to an understanding of why it is important for their children to receive an education.

Kimlin Ley described situations she remembered with friends who did not go to school due to family circumstances. She recalled a friend, who could not come to school because she had to help with her parents' business, saying,

> especially families that have a business to run, [it is important] that they do the business, they don't really care . . . When I was in high school, one of my friends, she's, she's a rich family and her parents always gave her, stop studying because she want, she want them and they want her to do the business, jewelry store and so doesn't want her to study. She really want to go to school because we have fun together and when we go to school a lot of fun and she doesn't like to go to the market and then sit in the store. So have some conflict with her parents.

Other participants discussed the level of parental involvement in education, noting differences between common western expectations and Cambodian experiences. It has been uncommon in Cambodia for parents to become involved in their children's education; parents do not feel this particular area of supervision to be their responsibility. Sambo described this, saying that for Cambodian parents, involvement in their child's education means providing for child school needs, such as tuition, books, pencils, and other such basics. However, if a child needs additional help, the parents may hire a tutor, but do not sit down with their child and review homework or lessons believing that such activities were the responsibility of the school and the teachers. Sambo said, "I look at families that I see, the parents don't really spend time with the children, on school work, to study, they just want to come home with the information. If they need tutoring and

what kind of tutoring, something like that, if they need something and then the parents, they provide that."

This lack of involvement on parents' part occurs for several reasons. Some parents, deprived of an education themselves under Pol Pot, do not have enough education to help their children; others may have business obligations that keep them from helping their children with their schoolwork. These reasons were confirmed in my conversation with Sokun, who said, "some family, the parents do not know anything about education. And other family have business so they are busy at the business. Only a few students have parents who teach them at home."

Kearney addresses "the innovative power of imagination… to transform given meanings into new ones, enables one to construe the future as… a horizon of hope" (Kearney 2004:39). This hope is often expressed with regard to the possibility of moving toward a global model of education, which was mentioned by several of the research participants. Sambo describes Cambodia's style of education pejoratively, saying that "compared to the education here [in the U.S.], you don't get a lot of freedom in the classroom. To speak of your opinion or . . . Like over here, the kids start the show-and-tell at a very early age, so it helps them with the public communication skills, whereas when I went to school many years ago, teacher never encouraged that." Yim, who also spoke of the problems in the Cambodian education system, said that if Cambodia is to prepare its children for the future, it must change its education system in order to compete with other countries. He believes that such changes are starting to occur. He said, "like today, we have mess in the schools. I think this is the way of change. Because the children can learn everything from abroad, from outside Cambodia, from expert, from

experience, like you, or like the other people . . . They need to improve their understanding to be better. They are not thinking in the box. They think out of the box."

This vision of a better future must be appropriated by the Cambodian people in a way that is appropriate to their culture. When considering what is appropriate for children's education today, Cambodians are torn between their loyalty to their identity as Cambodians and the western influence they encounter from their education. I asked Sambo about her cultural background and how it affects her decisions about caring for her nieces and nephews, of whom she now has custody in the States. She described how she felt she held on to her traditional Cambodian traditions and beliefs, even though she has lived in the States for nearly 30 years. She described a situation in which her niece was in the sixth grade and the school wanted her to enroll in a sex education class. Sambo thought back to her own education at that age and remembered that she had never had a sex education class, but felt that she had not suffered as a result, so she struggled with the decision of whether to let her niece take the class. She said that even thought she worked with the health department in Oakland and knew it was important for kids to learn about sexuality and health issues, as a Cambodian she struggled with the western concept of offering children sex education in the sixth grade.

If Cambodians can imagine a better future after coming to understand their past, they can make changes in the present that will offer a praxis for future change. Lin said that many NGOs are starting to understand this theory and put it into practice saying that "they work on a project to explain to them [poor families] what is important for now and what is important for future." If Cambodians can plan for a better future, they will keep

their children in school and make more appropriate policies for making education accessible to all children.

Deng Sophoeurt, the Manager of the Rotary school, spoke about how the education system is changing in Cambodia. He described both a controlled curriculum and then suggested that teachers are righteously refusing to follow it. Despite a lack of teacher training and a less-than-rigorous selection process, Deng feels that exercising such discretion is to the student's advantage, for the teachers have a

> methodology that they have to follow from the Ministry of Education. For three minutes they communicate with the children, then for four minutes they review the lesson from yesterday. Then for 25 minutes they work on new lesson, for two minutes they complete and send in whether they understood it or not, and for the rest of the hour they give advice or give homework. This methodology was ongoing and is still going on now as directed by the Ministry of Education. …This is the rule but maybe the teachers decide not to do it.

Chanroath confirmed the discretion that teachers have in deciding what to teach. He said, "but now, the teachers has, they all know own idea how to teach, not only based on the curriculum. The thing about the schedule or curriculum decentralization, the teacher can, oh! If they see that this lesson is not so important for his or her student, they can skip, they can select another topic."

These examples of teachers choosing to teach in what they believe is a more productive way demonstrates what Gadamer (2006:111) described as transformation, meaning "that something is suddenly and as a whole something else, that this other transformed thing that it has become is its true being, in comparison with which its earlier being is nil." Education in Cambodia can suddenly become something else as compared to the old system of teaching. This transformation of the way teachers teach is needed for the future of education. The current generation of teachers and parents in Cambodia

realize that children need to have a more appropriate education to prepare for a better future and develop skills to be successful in life and rise above poverty.

Summary

The abuses of the Khmer Rouge from 1975-1979 go beyond the physical and psychological damage Cambodians endured. The killing fields destroyed them economically and the long term implications continue to be an obstacle to the country's long-term goal, which is economic stability. It resulted in depriving a generation of children of an education, thereby making them potential economic parasites on the national economy instead of resources. The Khmer Rouge also depleted the population of future generations through genocide. Therefore, knowing the ills that come from revolutions and war, it is our responsibility as human beings to take derived action and take an "I can" attitude.

The education system in Cambodia is in need of drastic change. If Cambodia does not improve access to education for all children, the nation will never be able to rise above the conditions to which its people are currently subject. The disparity between rich and poor will increase, and access to education will become even scarcer. My research partners, who are all involved in education in some manner, all expressed a desire for change in the way children are educated. They acknowledge that their culture, poverty, and the events of the past have kept the education system from providing an appropriate education to all children.

Volunteering in Cambodia provided me with a new understanding of myself and of a culture that was foreign to me. I was fortunate to spend two weeks in a school working with children, teachers, and parents. The rest of my waking moments were

spent with the principal. The relationship we developed over two weeks is indescribable. It was the result of conversations about our lives, our past, our futures, our values and our hopes and dreams. Biologists Maturana and Varela (1987:247-248) write that "without love, without acceptance of others, there is no social phenomenon. …We have only the world that we bring forth with others and only love helps us bring it forth." Through my interactions with Lin, I experienced the power of the social phenomenon due to love of each other and acceptance of each other. By working together we were able to bring forth the world we envisioned through our love and friendship.

Using a hermeneutic participatory research method allowed me to have this learning experience. Because of my new understanding of myself and the Cambodian people, I continue to interpret my data in order to come up with a meaningful plan of action which is described in the findings section, which includes working with teachers and parents in helping them to improve the education system in their country. I came to realize a difference between the educated and non educated parents in Cambodia. Lin said that parents

> in rural areas don't have education. .. for Cambodian, their feeling is that, they don't have education, so they don't think about the future, you see? They don't think about the futures, they just want to earn for the day, day by day. …My parents, they didn't think about the future. [However] …there are some organization they work on a project to explain them what is important for now and what is important for future.

The benefits that the children of Cambodia will receive from the derived action of teachers, parents, and leaders is protection of their rights as children, will include a more appropriate education. This derived action comes at a time that we know as the historical present. It is based on the actions and promises of a succession of generations. Parents are committed to wanting to change the past and make the future better for the next

generations. Real change can only occur through the promise and commitment of each generation. Through derived action in the historical present, one can see the actions of the generations past and make a promise to continue it for the future. This promise, if kept by the succession of generations, could significantly improve the lives of children and families in Cambodia.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

By researching the historical background, applying the theoretical context, and interpreting the text of my conversations with my research partners, this dissertation attempts to understand the events of the revolution of the 1970s and the implications on the Cambodian concept of home and identity. The people of Cambodia are still suffering from the tragic events of over thirty years ago. My research partners have been unable to speak about their past or make the younger generation aware of how a political regime could destroy a people.

My research attempts to understand the following question: "what implications did the revolution of the 1970s have on the Cambodian concept of home and identity and how did this trickle down to protecting Cambodian children's rights that include the right to an education?" Many of the survivors of the killing fields are the parents of young children who share a responsibility for creating educational policy. As my research partners explained, many are still unable to discuss what has happened during the 1970s and as a result, many of the younger generation lack full understanding as to the events of the 1970s and the implications on their families, neighbors, and communities.

In order to understand why the younger generation was not fully aware of their past history and why the survivors of the killing fields would not talk about it, I had conversations with several research partners in Cambodia. In addition to these conversations, I also attended a conference in Siem Reap, lived in the "jungle" in Battambang" and volunteered at a school for two weeks. Together, these experiences helped me to achieve a fusion of horizons, through which I arrived at a new

understanding of how difficult life is for Cambodians. My partner's narratives provided important data that may carry the seeds of critical change for the education system in Cambodia. The collaborative nature of this research process is important, for necessary change will only work if it fits the culture and identity needs of the Cambodian people.

In order for the survivors of the killing fields to come to an understanding of what happened to their society and be able to heal and forgive, they must be encouraged to tell their stories so that through imagination younger generations can consider the past and imagine a future where genocide is inconceivable. In addition, the current generation can use this imagined future in practical ways, such as creating policies that provide an equitable system that provides an appropriate education to all children. If parents can educate their children, future generations will be better able to break out of the cycle of poverty and support themselves and their families by stimulating the economy. This section presents the findings of my research, the implications of my findings for curriculum and policy, the significance of my research, and my reflections.

Findings

The Cambodian government needs to use this peaceful period to bring about change in policy to protect the future of their country. Chanroath described how he sees the need for this to happen when he quoted current Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, who said that "we are peaceful now, we should keep it. We don't… need the civil war anymore. We should work together to build our country. …We should use the politics more positive."

The peace time activities of the Cambodian government should address the need to provide the emotional and physical support victims of war may need (Singer

2005:183). Reversing the effects of war is essential so that Cambodia can rise above its current poverty and become economically viable. This includes helping people heal from their experiences in order to integrate back into their families and communities and encouraging the generation in their 40s and 50s to create awareness among the younger generation so that these atrocities will never occur again. By providing a safe place for people in their 40s and 50s to tell their stories to the younger generation, this nation might begin the process of understanding what occurred in the past, and making a plan for the present that will change the future for education.

My research yielded several findings that I believe could lay the foundation for a more effective education system in Cambodia; these findings might also help those involved with education in Cambodia to understand the importance of providing all children with access to education. The findings fall into the following five categories: 1) Parental Education; 2) Family Involvement in Education; 3) Maintenance of traditions and telling and retelling stories of the past; 4) Curriculum reform; 5) Early Childhood Education.

To improve the education system for all children so that they will have the skills to live a prosperous life and escape the poverty that so many now endure, several things must happen. The government must appropriate the funding necessary to increase compensation for teachers, so that teachers are not forced to charge students for lessons and materials. In addition, the government must launch a large-scale effort to educate all people on the importance of educating their children. Finally, the government must bring the quality of education in Cambodia up to international standards. If the ultimate goal is for Cambodian students to receive a primary education that prepares them for higher

education, the educational system must provide access to all children and the quality of the education must meet international levels so that students can be competitive with those of other countries in their future endeavors.

1. Parental Education

Parents are not educated about the importance of keeping their children healthy and in school. Many parents cannot see past the day-to-day needs that make children part of a family-based workforce; consequently, children often perform manual labor or stay home with younger siblings so that all family members can contribute to the household.

2. Family Involvement in Education

In addition to a lack of parental value for formal education, there is a lack of support in the home for children's education. As some of my research partners mentioned, most Cambodian parents do not help children with schoolwork at home. The reasons for this lack of involvement can include unfamiliarity with the subject being studied, lack of time, or the attitude that a child should learn at school from a teacher rather than at home. But education cannot occur in a vacuum; it is a full-time process.

3. Maintenance of traditions and telling and retelling stories of the past

Cambodians have suffered many tragedies and understanding their identity both as individuals and as a people is instrumental to beginning the process of healing both themselves and their relationships with others; only when people understand themselves can they understand others, and then heal and forgive. At this point in time, Cambodians need to understand what actions led up the tragic events of the 1970s in order to begin the healing process. However, this does no occur because older Cambodians do not see the need to create a history and an identity to maintain and pass down to the younger

generations. Because the identity of their story makes the identity of the Cambodians (Ricoeur 1984:56-59), Cambodians who lack an understanding of this history lack both a current identity and a vision for the future, which affects educational opportunities for the children of today and of the future.

4. Curriculum Reform

Education for Cambodian children does not include instruction that provides them with the skills needed to compete for government jobs, pass university entrance exams, or think entrepreneurially. The lack of job diversity in Cambodia means that children must learn to think creatively in order to find innovative ways to earn a living and move away from subsistence farming. The rich legacy of the architecture, religious beliefs, and lifestyle that flourished in Cambodia during so much of its history offers another paradigm besides the killing fields from which children can view their heritage. This is currently lacking in the educational curriculum, which effects the current and future identity of the Cambodian nation.

5. Early Childhood Education

In order to be sure that children are ready for school, Cambodian education should begin as early as preschool. Education begins before birth: research shows that children's brains are developing in the womb, and that birth through five years is a critical period for development and learning (First 5 San Francisco). Most neuroscientists believe that at birth the human brain possesses all the neurons it will ever have and the circuits connecting neurons are completed by age five or six (Caine & Caine 1990: 66-70), implying that the most important learning occurs prior to first grade. Many believe that

social and emotional skills acquired in preschool are at least as important as academic skills.

However, this research revealed that Cambodians generally believe that preschool is a waste of time. As a cab driver told me on a recent visit to Cambodia, "only rich people send their children to preschool. It is a waste of money, because all they [children] do is play." The renowned Highscope/Perry study, conducted over a period of 40 years, helped the west to understand the significance of the learning that occurs in preschool and how society benefits from children's preschool experiences. The study found that adults at age 40 who had attended a preschool program earned more, were more likely to hold a job, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did not have preschool. In a nation where educational reform must include family education about their essential role as teachers, preschool may provide an important link between current deficiencies and future opportunities.

Research Implications and Proposed Actions

The Implications and Proposed Actions in this section rely on support either from the national level in Cambodia or through external funding. Without such support, it is extremely difficult to generate new programs. Currently, there are numerous external funding agencies working in Cambodia, ranging from UNDP projects to private NGOs. Proposals would need to be developed, submitted and accepted prior to specific planning for addition programs that could reflect the Implications and Proposed Actions discussed below. As one example of this approach to project development, Herda (2007:12-13) describes programs in Southeast Asia that received initial support from outside sources

and, over time, were able to see different possibilities that enabled them to take actions that resulted in their own self- sustainable living conditions apart from the external agencies who initially supported them. The following points each contain suggestions for actions that address the six research implications.

1. Children need to attend school: At this time, many children do not attend school, or do not attend full time since they are needed to work in the fields to support their family.

Proposed Action: The only way parents will allow their children to attend school full time is if there is food support for the families. Proposals need to be developed and submitted for funds and goods to be distributed so as to provide that essential support. Such proposals could be submitted to the Asian Development Bank, private NGOs, or the United Nations Development Program.

2. Parents need to understand the importance of education for their children: Parents, particularly in rural regions, need to understand the place education has not only in the lives of their children, but in the overall development of Cambodia. Education of young children is a major key to socioeconomic change. If children simply attend school without parental participation at a level that emphasizes the importance of education, no program that initiated such attendance will be sustainable.

Proposed Action: Two major activities could help parents reach new understanding about the importance of education for their children. One is to conduct village workshops by people who know how to effectively communicate both with people who are literate and those who are not. These workshops can be conducted through visual aids and conversations with parents in their own language. In addition,

parents could reach new understandings about education by receiving an invitation to see their children at work in a school setting.

3. Children need preschool for a head start on the learning process. Research (Schweinhart 2005, Mashburn et al. 2008, First Five Commission 2001) has shown that sending children to preschool helps prepare them for formal schooling and encourages students to stay in school. When the younger children are in school for several hours a day, older children who might otherwise have to stay home to care for these younger siblings would be free to attend their own classes.

Proposed Action: A proposal would need to be submitted for a preschool to be initiated.

4. Curriculum development should include traditional arts, dance and national history. Children need the opportunity to see the whole picture of their country. This entire picture includes the traditional arts as well as the history. Most young adults in Cambodia today know little if anything about their unique cultural contributions to the world. Moreover, they know virtually nothing about their recent history.

Proposed Action: The university professors responsible for the arts and for history should work in collaboration with elementary and secondary school curriculum leaders to incorporate both the arts (historical and performing) and history into all levels of curriculum.

5. Healing and forgiveness need to become part of the national narrative. The events and subsequent pain and suffering of the 1970s conflict have found little meaning in Cambodia today. It has been ignored, forgotten or never learned. To acknowledge the

truth is a first step toward the possibility of forgiving those who destroyed the culture, the land, the architecture, and the spirit of the Cambodian people.

Proposed Action: Although the Khmer Rouge Genocide Tribunal is suppose to be ongoing at this present time (Spring 2009), they continually face delays. Most of the research participants expressed doubt and concern that they will actually take place since the government has not instigated the trials and has protected the perpetrators. However, even if the tribunals do not take place, reflective activities embedded in curriculum, national monuments (in addition to the few currently existing), support for literature that reflects the pain and the need to go forward, and other possible activities, are all ways in which recognition, forgiving and re-remembering could take place. Healing can only take place if the need for forgiveness is directly faced by both the government and the people of Cambodia.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are three major recommendations for future research. Each one is related in some way to the above implications and the proposed actions.

1. An Inquiry into narratives. There are still many stories that have not been told by people who experienced the killing fields. In my conversations, several participants wanted to tell their stories. These stories could be collected and integrated into various aspects of the national educational curriculum. Additional stories could be collected by younger people as they learn of the horrific history from members of their families. The second generation stories may add another dimension to the overall national narrative.

2. A Study of Implemented Projects. It would be important to follow up with a study on any projects that stemmed from this current research. Critical to such a study would be a built-in assessment designed to determine what works and what needs more development.

3. Research into Other Regions of Cambodia. This research took place in one region of the country. It would be helpful to use the critical hermeneutic framework to study similar questions, but to do so in other areas of the country, both rural and more populated.

Significance of My Research

I conducted this research because I want to make education for young children a priority. Access to quality education as early as preschool prepares children for a life that is safe, healthy, and hopefully self-supporting. In addition, it is critical that developing nations educate their children in order to break the cycle of poverty that keeps the majority of their populations on the brink of starvation. Only when a nation can satisfy its people's basic needs can it create a strong culture rich in tradition, identity, and history.

The ultimate goal of this research is to work with my research partners to help Cambodians move toward healing and forgiveness, thus allowing them to rediscover (and possibly reinvent) their identity. As Criddle (1987:286) described, "I have lived in three very different worlds. For fifteen years, I was a pampered child of a well-to-do family in Phnom Penh, then, for four years, a slave in a rural communist commune. And I am now a professional woman with a demanding career, a wife and mother, an American citizen."

The ability to live in different worlds yet maintain one's identity is critical to what Ricoeur describes as "living well with others."

My research is also important because it reveals that maintaining traditions is important to helping children understand their identity and culture. One caveat: parents may find that some traditions are not in their child's best interest. It is important that families understand which traditions will support their child in learning the skills needed to become independent while retaining their valued cultural heritage.

Improving conditions for children through education will help eliminate poverty and human rights abuses. Through narrative identity, a fusion of horizons, and imagination, Cambodians can reinvent themselves and understand their identity, thereby bringing about meaningful, productive change for themselves and their children.

My Reflections

When I was in Battambang, Cambodia, or "the jungle" for two weeks, I was afraid, nervous, and lonely every night. The conditions of living in a developing country for three weeks can psychologically break one down emotionally. During the first week, I was ready to give up and go home because I did not think that I could endure the conditions for two weeks. I was overwhelmed by bugs, the inability to communicate and get basic food, sleepless nights, and leering looks from strangers. Although I felt very productive about my trip while I was working with children and teachers at school, I wanted to quit every day when I returned to my hotel. Instead of appreciating what a wonderful experience I was so fortunate to have, I could not wait to leave. Luckily I wrote in my journal every night instead of sleeping so that when I finally left, I was able

to relive my experience through my text. It was only after I moved on to Siem Reap that I appreciated how fortunate I was to have an experience that most people never have and how much I changed as a result of living in a jungle town for two weeks. By working closely with a culture that was so different from my experiences, I learned to become more open to how hard it must be to live a life as they do everyday. I learned what a privileged life I have led. I left feeling I had to do anything I could to help these people to achieve happiness, ease their pain, and achieve their goals. I believe that I was able to come to understand what a tough people the Cambodians are and that myself, as well as the Cambodians, are capable of accomplishing anything.

Final Thoughts

Cambodia is a country of survivors. Most people have a story to tell, but have chosen not to tell it. Through imagination, the Cambodian culture can be re-invented and re-imagined in a way that protects them from future atrocities. It is the first step to bringing about change. Imagining a future without poverty, fear of government, and the abuse of human rights allows the reinvention of a new identity. If Cambodians can reflect on their past and imagine what they would like the future to hold for themselves and their children, they can envision a praxis or plan of action for the present that will improve life in the future, a future that will provide an education, empowering children to learn skills and think as entrepreneurs.

Cambodians must retell their past history, culture, and experiences to the younger generation if they expect to protect their rich culture and identity and to ensure that the killing fields will never occur again. If Cambodians can make educating their children a priority, they can create policies that provide education for all, appropriate curriculum for

all children and compensation and education for teachers that encourage them to teach children and not seek ways to make extra money so that only the wealthiest children can afford education. When Cambodians retell their stories, they will be able to understand what has happened to them and begin to forgive and heal. Through forgiveness and healing, Cambodians will be able to imagine a brighter future for their children and create policies that provide for a more appropriate education and reflect their new understanding of their identity.

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APPENDIX A

Pilot Study Transcription and Data Analysis
of Conversation with Mr. William Ley
11/08/2007 1:30 – 3:00
Khmer Buddhist Monk Temple
5212 E. 10th St. Oakland CA

WL: So you are interested in children? There is so much abuse and what you call child sex trafficking in Cambodia.

NA: I am interested in children's rights and mainly focused on education. I work for a firm that does evaluation of education for young children. I go out and evaluate preschool programs and do assessments of children. So I go out and evaluate high quality preschools and suggest ways to improve their programs. So since this is my background, and I have a degree in ECE, I would like to stay with the rights of children.

WL: OK, I left Cambodia in 1979, the country formed the communist in 1975 so I can provide you an accurate history before that. From 1975-1979, the education system was shut down everywhere. Khmer rouge shut down all schools from kindergarten and whatever, and used them [children] as spies. They forced everyone to the rice fields and forced them to work very hard. I was one of the survivors from killing fields. So there was no school from 1975 to 1979, everything was shut down. There were no public services from the past government. They closed down all the hospitals but they made a make shift hospital in the countryside, and they set up a facility just like this for a hospital and they just put the bed right there and the patient there. They just shut down everything and pushed all the people to the rice fields to work hard from the morning until the sun set.

NA: May I ask how old you were?

WL: I think I was 24 or 25. I was third year of university. I studied law and economics and they shut down my school too. So I did not finish my bachelor's which I was supposed to finish by 1976.

NA: I read that Pol Pot did not want people around that were educated. So I would think you were in a very risky situation being that you were in a university.

WL: When I came here then I continue in America like when one of the people ???(inaudible) that interview me, I say, my eyeglasses, I throw away. I could not use my eyeglasses because if they saw that I wear my eyeglass than they consider me one of the intellectual.

NA: Just by wearing eyeglasses made …

WL: Yes, just by wearing eyeglasses that was a real lot at that time. I had to throw away sometimes I could not see because I need eyeglass but no choice because I could not reveal that I was a student of university. I just let them know that I am just a normal person.

NA: They did not know you were in school?

WL: They did not know. That is how I survived. I hide my identity. Long, long story, I have a natural gift that since I was born, if I see something for the people I jump in for the people and I want to see that happen something bad for the people so I always do something – that is why I get stuck with the community from here. At that time people were starving to death, children, old people, those who were sick who could not do the work, they force those people to meet the criteria of working status. That mean that if a man can move 3 cubic meters of dirt or build a dam, then everybody had to do the same. Now when a person is sick and cannot do that, then they say well you should not eat the same as a normal person can do, so you have to cut your ration or your meal. But during that time there was nothing good. Just white rice soup because they destroy the private kitchen and everything has to be income in the common kitchen. You cannot sit with your family, three four or five and have your own food among your family, you have to sit with other people to make a group of four or group of five per table that they assign you. And at that time, no one can own anything. My personal belonging at that time was a spoon, one spoon. A spoon is very useful for the rice soup and a right handed person, but not the left handed person, most of them right handed. The soup was water, there was not meat in there. So I was right handed and had my spoon and that was it. I didn't own anything more. They did not allow you to own many set of clothes. They allow you to keep two set of clothes. They conduct search, not strip search but just when you are not home, you were out in the field, they came. They came at any time and just searched your personal belonging. They went through your room, they went through everything and looked for what ever they needed to look. If they found jewelry or watch, because you were not allowed to wear that. Some people when they get pushed out of their house into the county they still have jewelry and hide it in their clothes. Sometimes we call it "anca" it mean authority and sometimes we look at this we call camera, the Khmer call it camera. You know general speaking that would mean to everyone, people who were signed by the authority or the chief of the village. That person had the right to do whatever they want and at that time there was no court, no trial, nothing, no legal proceedings. No due process of law. Whatever the chief of the village say, you are through, that is it. Sometimes a person do something wrong, sometimes one per week, sometimes one per month, they have a "town hall meeting." Here we call it a town hall meeting but over there they just do an open air town hall meeting. And during that town hall meeting, to me I call it like self-criticism. They force the people to reveal yourselves for the past couple of days, to reveal yourself to everyone in the village to let them know, and they want to hear from you that you will commit to change. They give you three times, three opportunities to change. First, second and third. If you continue to make that mistake, then you gone. You gone, means executed.

NA: I read that children were brainwashed to believe that they could not trust their families or anyone, including themselves. That evil was in everyone. Children were also used to make decisions as to who should be executed. Is that accurate?

WL: It depends on what kind of issue you deal with. At that time they take the children. Let's say that they do not belong to you anymore. You had to send them to the children's camp. And the children's camp, even though before we send them to the children's camp even though the kids stay at home in the village, the kid belong to the kid group and they have a group leader and start with a group of six or a group of thirty, and the whole village regardless of how many children, they have a group leader and they make the decision from there whatever they need to make. Yes, they may ask the children for opinion, and figure out that most of the time the kid under eighteen, and those kids under eighteen, how can you assume those kids are mature enough to decide on what is wrong and what is right? And sometimes regarding they use the kid to be a spy, I mean that to be one of the anca, that "camera". That person become belong to the authority, just like an officer or an official of the anca. So those kids were spying on activities including the parents. What they call enemy does not mean that person carry a gun or be part of revolution. What they call enemy is what they call in the people mind, they are thinking about ?????? inaudible, they are thinking about eating good. I myself, I tell you that I was so hungry I think about all the good food I used to eat like the Cambodian noodle. And you cannot let them know that you are still thinking about what it was in the past, good food, good times. Those kind of things they call the enemy of capitalism. That everything they blame to compare to capitalism and socialist and communist. When they talk about capitalism they talk about you are a class ????????inaudible, useless people.

NA: so they were blaming the situation on capitalism?

WL: Yes, and that include not allowed to eat with fork. Spoon ok, but not fork and spoon. I never seen during the Khmer era anyone eat meal with fork. They destroy that attitude, that they used to eat with fork and spoon and knife and now they destroy and just allow just one spoon. Anyone who had that concept in mind is the enemy so that is why when they use the little kid that are under eighteen especially, to be the official camera of the anca, they mean that to be a spy, a official of the anca just like if I work for the government here or the county I am the public servant, same thing. Because hat kid like public servant for the anca. Now that kid is the one that they trust and sometimes they use that kid and what they report from that kid what they saw the parent do and then they use that to execute the parent.

NA: I would like to hear the story about what it was like for you as a child growing up pre-Khmer rouge and what are the implications for the children that grew up in the rice camps and were the public servants for the anca. I would like to hear about what happened before and after and trace what happened to these children now.

WL: Before Khmer Rouge we were in school, there was kindergarten, first grade, second grade, but over there they start with the twelfth grade which is 1st grade and they call it twelfth grade – the opposite way of here. I prefer like here the first grade, then the second

grade but over there they start from twelve in the very early class not kindergarten but first grade. And then when they are in second grade they go down, ten, nine, eight. Now from when I was a little kid I did not go to kindergarten, I did not know about it. I think back at the time it happened but not officially in the system. In the cities the high class people or the parents that work for the government they send their kid to kindergarten and the system was not nationwide. It is not like here we have kindergarten in every county, every city, nationwide. It was not like that at that time, so I went straight to the first grade because I was born in the countryside so I went to twelfth grade, eleven, ten nine. Now from there I study in Khmer [language] then from nine, eight, seven, I studied in French and Khmer, half and half, fifty-fifty. And I passed the – we call it – it is not really the exam- but it was a competitive exam before moving from the sixth grade to the second grade. After the second grade we call it going to high school. The high school start from second grade – like here to twelfth grade to fifteenth grade – they have one extra year. So from there from the fourth grade to the sixth grade I study in French in Cambodia. If we pass the competitive exam that means from the sixth grade to the seventh grade we have the right to go to high school. Now the competitive exam I remember when I took that test, they need 300 students from the whole city, beyond that you failed you flunk, so they just need that 300 move into the second grade and we had to pay for, the parent had to pay for the school system to buy the chair, buy the table. I pay about $2500 at a time. Everybody had to pay for the school fee.

NA: And that was the public school?

WL: Yes.

NA: So there were only 300 positions in the school and that meant that is what the government needed…

WL: From the second grade, yes.

NA: And the rest of the people they did not get in? what happened to them?

WL: They don't care. You stay in the same grade and study and try again next year. Now in elementary school you can try again and again, they don't care how many times. In high school you flunk twice, you stay in the same period for 2 years, you out. You are out of the public school system.

NA: And then what happens.

WL: Then you have to find private school or work. That is why I did not like the school system over there. And I will tell you exactly when how we do the test between their system and this system here, this system I really desire the most. And I think you chose the right project. Now if you can change the whole school system over there you are the first person to make it. I can design a school system over there and my friend he is in the national high education system in Cambodia now. When you go there I write you a letter to go see him. He work for the ministry of education and he is high education. They have

change system because we talk about go to high school from second grade – from seventh grade to thirteenth grade, if we flunk on he same grade twice they are out. They allow me two year on the same level, same grade. After that, where do they go? That is why a lot of people out of public school dropping and become farmer. It is not like here – we call a farmer, oh he must make a lot of money to be a farmer – you must be a rich person. Over there a farmer is very low status, low class in society. Farmer start from the bottom to the top.

NA: Do they purchase land?

WL: Well, some of them own land from generations, but not really just a small piece of land producing growing rice. But then for the rice people, they buy a lot of land and they hire people to work for them or sometimes for the poor when they do not have the land, they still do farming but they do like let's say I have a lot of land, and I say ok you do it for me and then the production that we got here, you got 50% and I got 50%. I still make some activity even though I don't have physical activity I still don't spend all of your labor. During that time I think that 60% of farmers and then it's about 20% of the persons work for the government.
The rest of them after the fourth year of high school which is the ninth grade they have to do the national exam. We call it the first diploma, nationwide, national exam. If the student even though they pass their grade on a yearly basis, in their class on a quarterly basis, they divide in three quarters per year. If they pass for three quarters for year, they have the right to go for national exam. For the national exam, the first diploma at ninth grade, they have two times to pass the test. If they fail, then they do it one more time within the next month and a half. If they fail that and their students remain in the same class they have the right to take the national exam again. If the student fails the second time they are out of the public system. They to find private school, and they can take the national exam with the regular public school student but from private school. The ministry of education allows them to do that but then the students that came from private school, they still have the status from private school but not from public school. But then when they pass the exam their diploma is recognized by the ministry of education as the same status. From there the student can go to the public school and attend higher grades. From there we have 10^{th} grade, 11^{th} grade, 12th grade. We do have one at the eleventh grade. We call it baccalaureate, I don't know they don't have it here, and we have to pass the last one in the 13^{th} year. We call it second baccalaureate, the second diploma from high school. Before we have the right to go to university we have to pass this level of high school. It is national exam. I remember when I took it in Phnom Penn among 2500 for the whole students, and passing about 200. It's about a 1 and 10 ratio and I passed that and in my room, they classify about 25-30 candidates per room, to take the test. And in my room there is only 2 that passed the test, there is one other lady, she passed away already, she attended provident high school with me when I came to Phnom Penn and only two of us passed. The system is just like a triangle where there is a wide space at the bottom and the shape goes very sharp to the end at the top. So how, what is the future of the big pool down here [demonstrating the triangle], what happened to them? Never care, that is why I do not like the system. The system is like you have to have good memory and recitation, is that the right word? I speak French so many times I still use

French. Just like Hmong blessing you have to remember word by word, and we wake up early and I stay late and I read Chapters, and we talk about biology at the time, and I had to recite word by word and the difficult part was we have geography, we have history, natural science, philosophy, we have dictation in Cambodia, recitation in French, and they all go together in national exam. You have to study all of that that you learned for the three years, whatever you studied for whole year you count in three days. You miss that three days, boom, that is it. I took the test and they talk about triceps, they talk about how the human bone can be expended during childhood and something like that. So everything you have to memorize, you have to prepare everything, and lets say for natural science we have 35 Chapters, we don't know which Chapters are going to be on that test from Chapters 1-35 because the ministry of education is the one who decides. He is the one who get the proposed subject, the proposed test from all of the teachers all over the country, lets say 4 or 5 proposed, and they take it from there. So they have about 20 proven. They mixed it all up and they pick one. They seal it, put it in the box and send it to all the centers. We have about 100 centers and they open it on the day of the exam so we don't know. That is why we have to prepare from Chapter 1 to Chapter 35. Geography, history the same. We don't know. For myself, my own experience, 2 passed the baccalaureate exam and I blame the system a lot, because when I come here and I took the test here, even though the questions allow you to answer a,b,c,d, our system [US] better than over there [Cambodia], you study the whole thing you comprehend the whatever, but then more likely it is due to a good memory. If you talk about learning, not very much. Here if you study, you read it, you don't understand you are not clear, you cannot really answer the question. That is why this system is better. When I come here, I could not bring all the certificates, that I went to high school, that I had second baccalaureate, and I went to university and had one more year to complete, I could not prove. So when I came here I start all over, but the good part is that when I come here the first test that I took, because I have family so I have to find a skill to survive and I took the test to the East Bay skills center, the class for the electronic program, it is a state program but very competitive, and I passed and I was selected to be in the program, but after that I transferred to Mary college, and I pleaded with the counselor and I say just give me the test, let me try and see what my understanding is and I say ok, let me try and I take the test for the electronic computer program. So I took the test and they say ok, you can be in the class. So they admit me to the class and I took me one year and a half to finish my associate degree. I learn fast because I know French and we used to learn over there background and that is fine. And I work at the same time, I work very hard, and go to school at the same time, and I run business and still go to school at night time, and I am just hungry for school.

NA: Me, too. I work full time and I go to school on weekends. It is hard.

WL: Yes, but I love it.

NA: I do too.

WL: I love to read, so that is my hobby. Part of my hobby. When I came to America I had $20. the person who gave me the money, he is a big person right now in Cambodia. He is the ministry Cabinet of Education; I think that he is one of the ministers.

NA: It sounds like prior to the Khmer Rouge you had a happy childhood. What about the children of the generation after you. What do you think has happened to them now, after what they went through?

WL: You are talking about what year?

NA: Let's say the children who were in the rice fields during the Khmer reign during the 70's?

WL: Well, from 1975-79 there was no education at all.

NA: Yes, the schools were shut down, so what has happened to children like that?

WL: The communists took over in 1975 to 1979, there was no school. They could not read or write and then later on when the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in 1979 and even though very tough, very hard for people to move from one neighborhood to another and everywhere that you went to you must have a pass from the chief of the village. For example, here we are here and the next village is about one half a mile over there, and you have relative over there and your relative sick, you cannot go over there to see the patient, they say no because you are not a doctor you cannot go over there. Why not just work for the productive class, work for the anca, work for the revolution and then be assigned by the revolution and they are more productive and they go there. But just consider human life like material, just like this cup, if the cup can still be used reuse it, if not throw it away.

NA: So those children that were raised during that time now have children of their own, I guess I am thinking of the trickle-down effect. What do you think is happening—how are those children being raised?

WL: If I go there from when the Vietnamese invade Cambodia in 1979, and then most people went to the border, and we formed the can???? Along the border and no children that were born have the proximity to be educated but not through the official school system. It was supported by the United Nations – then who were the teachers, who knew literacy, then those became the teachers in the jungle. Now for those in the capital of town, when Hung Sen Gung came to power in 1979, they opened the schools so that students can go to school from the first grade on. I talk about the region before the election of the United Nations I think in 1992 or 1995 – it was the first general election in Cambodia. So we call it the Hung Sen German????but they are backed by the Vietnamese, but we call them PRK, People Refugee of Kampgen???? The POK, came to power from 1979 then they restore all the schools by that time. So the school system that they restored is the same when like I was a child but I call it frustrating. They go the opposite way. My system went back to French system. And those that live in the jungle

have the proximity to go to school in the make shift school it is not really a school. That is it, you can get that much during the war until the United nations had the general elections in Cambodia in 1995 and then I think all the schools go back to normal. Those who live in the jungle go back to town and those who were out of school say well I don't need to go back to school.

NA: Do you think those people see the importance of an education now for their children?

WL: Oh yeah, sure. You see the education system now in Cambodia is a little more westernized. A lot educated people right now compared to before, because there are two factors, 1. during the Khmer Rouge when they shut down all the schools, they are learning from there that we need the education for the children, 2. after the general elections, a lot of westerners, a lot of NGO's go in there and all the school systems move toward the western standard. And like we have here informational system, marketing system, they have it there right now which is a surprise to me. One thing that I want you to focus on if you write the project, one thing that has never changed for the school system over there is they waste a lot of time for the kids. Here when we go to school in the morning 7 or 8 o'clock, the kid come back home at 3 or 4 right? During lunch time the kid eat lunch at school and have break for one hour and then go back to class. That is something that the government has to change. For those that live over there they don't give much priority to the poor. For those that live far from school, they have a lack of communication, transportation. When I went to school, those who lived 5 miles away still come to school. Where I live I spend about a half hour, he spend about three hours. He had to wake up early in the morning, he had to walk to come to school and the school recess is at 11 o'clock the first session for lunch break, at 11 o'clock they don't care where you go, the government don't care. So the kids sometimes cannot go back home, three hours walking there is not time and come back to capture the school time at 2:30 PM, they cannot. So they have to be around. Where ever, we don't know, sometimes just sleep at the corner of the school, sometimes just stay under the tree. Even now, talk about the country side, the same, because at 11 o'clock school is recess for lunch break. Where they go we don't know. For the people who live in town, they can drive the car, pick up their kid for lunch and take them back at 2:30.

NA: so there is a 2 ½ hour break for lunch.

WL: I am not quite sure of what time, but still children have to go back home and come back during that time. During my generation, it was 11-2:30. From 2:30 continuing for two more hours and school recess at 4:30 or 5. the most 5 pm, not beyond 5. Why don't we have a system that let the government provide lunch, let the kid stay right there, eat it, and then continue and then let them go in two hours. So why don't the government take care of that part? Very upset me. Even now it still exist, the lunch break the kid has to go back home. Here we start to work at 8 o'clock and work 8 hour and we get home at 4:30 or 5, right? Over there, no. the big boss, let's say the schedule start at 8:30 or 9 for the government, at 8:30 the person hang around the restaurant and then leave around 11 o'clock and go home and eat lunch, go back to the office at 2 o'clock or 2:30 and most of

them never go back. They check out for lunch and most of them gone for the day. And that is why it is ridiculous and that is why the system needs to be changed.

NA: I am also interested in the emotional state of children and the welfare of children. One of the things that I am interested in learning more about in addition to the education system is for the children of the Khmer rouge reign who are now raising children, if they were brainwashed into believing that they cannot trust anyone.

WL: During Khmer rouge?

NA: yYs, don't trust anyone, how do they feel about themselves and what stories are they telling their children about what it is like to be Cambodian and what is your identity, what is your culture, what are your traditions?

WL: Well, during the Khmer rouge, they don't explain much about the culture.

NA: It sounds like they tried to erase the culture.

WL: yes, they tried. When they talk about the culture they talk about that we are strong, we can do anything better than the capitalist system because we start from scratch. They go to their philosophy, they tell the people we are the best, we can stop or start and do whatever we want, and can you believe that when they push the people out of town, I went with my uncle and he has a car, a pick up, the car still in good condition, just two year old, why didn't the Communist use the car for the hospital and transport the patient to the community hospital about 7 kilo away. Why not use that pick up? No, they destroy it. They take it apart and build like an ox cart. Use as an ox cart. It take 3 or 4 hours to go 7 kilo by ox cart to take patient to hospital. Why destroy the car?

NA: So they destroyed everything, materially, emotionally, everything.

WL: So they want to show that they can make something from nothing. They don't tell the children here is your culture. Instead, they say you have to be strong and act more and they teach the children that everything belong to the anca or the revolution. Either you stay here or you go to other part of the country still a revolution everywhere. No one own anything. Nobody even own your own body, everything belonged to the revolution. And then they give example, even your parent do not own you. Your parents belong to the anca, because they can assign your parents to work anywhere, and they don't have the right to say no. So from their perception everything has to belong to the anca. So the kid thinks if my parents do something wrong, I have to report them to anca and you the enemy, just from their perception. You the enemy.
I talk about the marriage. The one time they assign me to be the coordinator of youth whoever want to get married. OK, the gentlemen want to marry the young lady, they don't go to the parents. They don't need the parents anymore. As long as they are 18, they don't need that parents anymore. So they go to the youth group leader and I was a coordinator at one time and we say ok, we go talk to the girl over there, and ask if you ok to marry this young man. They bypass the parent and if the girl say ok, then they set the

time and date. They do collective marriage, you know two, twenty, or fifty couple at a time. They just shake hands and declare that ok you are now husband and wife.

NA: So you are making a really interesting point that I think I would like to further investigate also. If during this time period a person's identity seems like it was erased, what is the identity of this generation that has young children now? Are they still soldiers of the Khmer rouge? How do they express their idea of their identity and what home is?

WL: Those who were under Khmer rouge and they now have children?

NA: Yes. Who are very different from you because you grew up with a normal childhood before the Khmer rouge took over, so you had a past to compare it with. What about those younger than you that were not old enough to remember a past prior to Khmer rouge? What kind of childhood are they giving their children?

WL: Ok, part of my clarification to you about when they shut down the education system, I think that now they think that anything they can get to give the children they do because they don't want their children to miss like they were during that time, so the school system right now, I talk about school first in Cambodia, for those parents, they really dedicated for their children for if they can get them to school, or whatever they can afford it. But they really don't want to their children to have bad luck like they did. You go to Cambodia now you see private school a lot, English class a lot. A lot of children speak English and the educational program is very moved right now toward western civilization. My friend in the ministry realize how bad it is and he go with me to university of law in Cambodia. We went through a lot, we tried to liberate the country when the communist took over but then he continued his education and he had a business close to my business. So he tried to bring the system here to promote the educational system in Cambodia, so talking about the educational system right now is, you realize that they used to have something good that they completely shut down, and then the kid become ignorant, very illiterate, and it looks like the rains comes and the flowers bloom all over again. So then people are really excited for the school system. So talk about the educational system, they really move forward in the meantime. They have a lot of private school, private university, look like most can speak English. It is not like before, at least the finish some part of the educational system.

NA: So they are making a big effort to be sure that education is a priority?

WL: Yes.

NA: How are people explaining and passing along culture and traditions if that part of their history was erased?

WL: Now talk about the culture, the culture never remain the same. The culture will change from time to time, depend on the need of society. The culture of Cambodia has moved to more like that of Thailand than Vietnam. But no matter what they still regard

Vietnamese as the enemy. They still see them as the traditional enemy. See kind people a little bit better but to me you have to go case by case.

NA: Is there tension between Cambodians and Vietnamese?

WL: Well, into their believe in their perception, to their tradition, they say you are my traditional enemy.

NA: Because it was only 20-30 years ago that Vietnam invaded them?

WL: Just because you are the enemy and I am Cambodian. Just like that. Now Cambodian people are very discriminating. If you cannot see, you cannot see. But I lived there throughout the system, I compare my point from there to outside world, in their minds it is discriminating. But they are very nice. The actions that they treat you, you don't see that they discriminate against you. They do not discriminate against westerners, just Vietnamese. If you go there they treat you very good, very respectful. Just the Vietnamese, but not other people. Because I don't know why the history say, we lost a lot of land to Vietnamese. Centuries ago the land in ?????????? now belongs to Vietnam. Still fight over it to try to get it back for Cambodia. Just like East Timor and West Timor. So that is why they have a sense of discrimination against Vietnamese but not westerners. To the westerners, people treat you like [kiss}. People very nice.

NA: So are you saying that Cambodians are moving toward a Thai culture?

WL: Not really, more toward Thai, they copy very fast and also to the western side.

NA: Is that because they had their culture and traditions wiped out in the 70s due to Khmer Rouge, or was it just natural?

WL: It is just natural time to time, excitement, fast learning, copy from each other.

NA: So as a traditional Cambodian, do it bother you that your traditions and culture that you grew up with is eroding?

WL: To me, I think….sometimes I do orientation with shop keepers in this community with this organization. I see people, I say, culture never remain the same. Culture has to change from time to time, in response to the need of the people, to the need of society. I give you example. I say, look we from the old culture, and we come to this country and I still bring some old culture with me. When my kid growing up in this country and they born here, we have to move our self a little bit to this half and tell our children, say hey this is my culture right here and you are over here, you are in a very civilized culture with a new generation in the US. Whatever we can get from them we can get from them but we cannot convince them to say you have to move yourself to a subtease culture (1:04:52) You cannot do it that way. We have to compromise, we have to kiss our expectation from home. For their part we have no culture with us, we have to adjust ourselves. That is why I say that culture has to change.

Talk about Cambodian culture, they are not allowed to have any relationship between girl and boy before marriage. Everything has to be arranged by parent before married. In the culture this cannot be useful in this society. We saw that. Because when the kid go to school, you cannot control the kid. You cannot say hey, because you know there are men over there, because you bring your boyfriend to my house, you out, to kick you out. You cannot call me a stranger anymore, I will not recognize you whatsoever, you are out. Al right? You see that? Because the big system is here. And the kids they are born here and they go to school in this country. They may be Cambodian but their culture is totally Americanized. We cannot convince them and say you cannot have a boyfriend. The Cambodian culture not allowed daughter have boyfriend whatsoever. We as parent make arrangement for marriage. You not be united. Now I can see, my best friend have daughter and she have boyfriend.

NA: So it is happening over there?

WL: So, it is happening already. And the same in Cambodia. Right now I heard about dating, they go out and then blah, blah, blah, that is very common right now. So they have to understand that. The culture is not the same.

NA: So you have been in the U.S. a while, so as you raise your children, and the culture becomes more westernized, do you feel like you are losing your identity?

WL: No. No, because we still preserve most of them. Ok here are the thing, I recognize, lets say to me, even though before I came to US, I thought in my mind I say my kid, even though [if] I growing up in Cambodia for example, I still live in Cambodia, I oppose to the whole culture where marriage has to be arranged by parents. In the middle of the bride and the groom the parent sign that it ok and then the parents tell you that you have to marry. I oppose that. I just speak for myself. I oppose that because it is not the way it is supposed to be. I do not see it as a good point. It is good for . . . for the bride and groom both of them have to stick together and live their wonderful life and not for the parent to be involved. It might be five year, ten year and the parent will die, so who will take care for the new life. Both of them, the groom and the bride so let them make a choice, whether they can live together, whether they can get along together or they can be together. So that is my perception.

NA: And you think you would have the same perception even if you had not come to the states?

WL: Yes!

NA: Wow, that is amazing because if you had not known any different (ie exposure to the traditions in US), how would you arrive at that decision to think? That is very progressive.

WL: Because I listen to myself and I like freedom.

NA: That is a very interesting point.

WL: And I think that I believe in individual freedom. And also I think about, I decide I was in third year university of law and they [parents] were trying to get me know one of the girl from another family and I think to myself I have to decide on my own and I go to school.

NA: So even though your parents wanted you to meet a girl you said….

WL: Yes, I have to decide on my own. If they can ??????(1:10:10), but still I have to make the decision by myself. For just quick introduction, it is ok, they come and they say, Mr. Ley I want to introduce you to Miss, the daughter of my best friend. That is fine.

NA: But not to marry her.

WL: Yes, not to marry her. Even though the decision to marry have to come from me. Not from them.

NA: Where do you think your idea about freedom came from? Is it because you grew up in a time period when your freedom was taken from you?

WL: Well I grow up and the freedom come when I go to high school and I still pined ????? pinned over Cambodia. And some of your family in province Suavia, they live over there and I saw the royal family children. They hang around high school and they beat up the student and they go everywhere

NA: The royal family children beat up other students?

WL: Yes, beat up my friends. At one point I joined force with them and I beat up them and later on when they parked the car and where ever they go, their cars untouchable. No one can touch. The police support them, look like they have high status, and we as common people we treat them very low and sometimes you bring a sling shot and shoot through the window. So those kind of things – sometimes my friends come to me and I say, hey go beat them up. So I hate that kind of abuse. So I like freedom, so from there I become totally revolutionary to this concept.

NA: So growing up in Cambodia as a child, are you saying there was not a lot of freedom in many ways, or was it just in this school system?

WL: A child, you know we talk about a family approach, the family approach does not really have freedom for the child. The child still has to be under supervision of parent, even though over there at that time, most of the parent not allow their daughter to go to school because they did not want the daughter to know read and write to write love letter to boyfriend. That is the point. That could be good for your project. That is why most of the Cambodian female become illiterate person because of that idea, the traditional concept of the parent.

NA: This is a really interesting point. You are saying this is Cambodian tradition. Has that changed?

WL: They say the women is no need to go to work. The women is very weak in class compared to the man. The woman just take care of the teacher. They say the woman cannot even go around all the Kitchen. You are not capable of doing anything so you learn how to do the kitchen stuff. That's it. So the society put the woman down compared to the man because we say that the woman cannot do anything. You just stay home do the kitchen and let the man go to work. You don't have to go to school to get high education because later on you write a letter to your loved one. They don't want that. They just want a woman to stay home and serve the husband. They just want the woman to submit themselves, to become submissive to the husband.

NA: Is that still true today?

WL: Yes, still true today.

NA: Are there still women who do not go to school?

WL: Yes, there are some that liberate themselves, become more westernized, more civilized, then they will send their daughter to school. Now this is another idea for you – polygamy. Because society, they low the status of the woman down already, so when a women become married with a man – here we all the same, same label, same right. But over there the husband is still the head of household. They go by Chinese Confucianism that the man is always perfect by nature. So if you go over there right now, you see an officer of the government that 99.5 percent – polygamy. They have more than one wife. They sick.

NA: You have given me so many things to think about.

WL: And talk about the due process of law. Over there is no due process of law. They have the constitution but there is no due process. Technically, there is no check and balance. How there is no check and balance I give you an example. Mr. ????? he is now prime minister, he make law but he also enforce law. He is the executive branch and the police. How can you have a check and balance when the same person institute the law and then apply the law at the same time? You cannot. This thing about polygamy, it just come out about a year ago, maybe just they try to get one of the prince who belong to ????? – he has an affair, he has a wife so they come out and say hey you have your wife and you cannot fool around with another lady. So they come up with that law and they try to charge him, but still they not implement the law so they still do that.

NA: I guess that is the argument that we keep hearing about human rights in many countries. They have the laws but no one enforces them because they have no checks and balances system.

WL: One of the singer stars in Cambodia got shot and I helped to took her out. She in Sacramento. We very secret with John McCain group and Colin Powell. And finally we her to Highland hospital in Sacramento. I went to see her twice. It is very secret. One day I will bring her to this temple. I talk with her father who the blessing for your daughter, bring her here. I have a son 19 years old who pass away and she is 20 years old. Almost the same day as my boy and I feel alone because of it. And she got shoot and they still cannot arrest the guy. I totally blame the prime minister. I totally blame him. You need to be responsible for them because you are head of state and a crime occur and you never arrest the fellow. So who behind this murder? When they shoot her, they kill her mother on spot. But fortunately she still alive but she paralyzed. I go to see her twice. She lay down and cannot get up. Terrible…..

NA: It is terrible..

WL: I blame the government. No matter what you need to find the murder. That is your obligation, your responsibility.

NA: I want to respect your time, so I have a couple of more quick questions please. The Cambodian Community Development Inc. that you are part of – I read in their mission statement that they strongly believe in preserving the traditions and culture of the Cambodians. How are they doing that?

WL: Talk about the culture need to be changed. Just like cultural heritage. Just like we still do some kind of dancing. Just a tradition where it is custom to teach the children to respect old people , things like that. Not the thing about marriage – more like celebrations.

NA: Is there a large Cambodian population in this area?

WL: Yes, statistically I do not know the figure. Next time we have a celebration you can come here. You can come on the 24th – I just sent a letter to the Oakland PD – we have a religious festival

NA: Thank you, but I have a lot of travel for work in the next month so I already know I will be out of town and cannot make it.

WL: Then come on New Year. On the 24th we use the public street for parade so we need to inform them. They know that we cannot do it without them approve.

NA: Could I continue to contact you in the future? I have learned so much from you today and I know I will have so many more questions that I will want to follow up on.

WL: Sure, I very pleased to share with you.

NA: I cannot express my gratitude for your time and sharing your story with me.

WL: Let me give you my card.

NA: Thank you.

Pilot Study Data Analysis

In this section, I present the analysis of my research for my pilot study and come to certain conclusions in view of the hermeneutic theories that inform the data. This section consists of a conversation in which my participant and I discussed surviving the killing fields, the identity and culture of Cambodians, and the education system in Cambodia. The three categories I address are: Cambodians' ideas of home and identity, the changing culture through a fusion of horizons, and imagining a brighter future for the children of Cambodia. These themes were analyzed through the interpretive, hermeneutic text to provide a framework to interpret identity and education and find new meaning for future Cambodians.

The data analysis that resulted from conversations with my research partner followed a series of steps which enabled me to come away from the text with a new understanding of my data. After taping my conversation, I transcribed the data collected. While reading the conversation transcription, I pulled out significant statements, developed themes, and place them into categories. In order to substantiate the categories and themes I found meaningful quotes from my research partner's conversation. I read through the conversation text several times, to ensure that my themes were representative of the critical hermeneutic framework. On occasion, some themes fit into more than one category, i.e. fusion of horizons and imagination. By discussing my analysis using theories by Ricoeur, Habermas and Kearney, I was able to discuss the research problem at a theoretical level and provide insight into implications from the discussions that provided new insight and new direction for my research issue under investigation. The implications made it easy to discern aspects of my study that merit further study.

Three themes seemed to be salient in my discussion with my conversation partner. They included the identity of the Cambodians through narrative, the fusion of horizons that occurs when people become open to understanding another and the past, and the use of imagination to create a brighter future through the improvement of children rights and education in Cambodia. Mr. Ley provided rich examples of each of the categories on several occasions during our conversation. Because of his strong feelings on these topics and my personal interest in them, I have chosen them as the themes for my dissertation.

APPENDIX B

Timeline of Historical Cambodian History

Cambodian Historical Time Line (Criddle 1987:287-289)	
Timeframe	**Event**
1st Century A.D.	Dawn of known Cambodian history/India influences tribal culture
8th Century	Ancient Khmer Kingdom with its god-kings
9th-14th Century	Kingdom reaches greatest size- Angkor Wat built
15th Century	Thailand conquers part of Khmer Kingdom
16-18th Century	Ancient Kingdom declines and history is forgotten
1864	Cambodia becomes a French Protectorate
Late 1800s	Angkor Wat rediscovered – history made known to modern-day Cambodians
20th Century	French makes 19 year-old Sihanouk a puppet king/World War II/Japanese occupy Cambodian 1941-1945
1945-1953	Sihanouk applies pressure on France via world opinion & gains independence for Cambodia
1954	Cambodian independence/Vietnamese defeat the French at Diem Bien Phu/French leave Indochina/Vietnam divide into North and South
1955	Sihanouk renounces Kingship to become Prince & President
1970	Sihanouk replaced in bloodless coup/Khmer Republic established under General Lon Nol
Spring 1975	Khmer Republic defeated by Khmer Rouge/citizens driven from cities/Communists also rule in Laos & Vietnam
July 1975	Wet Monsoon "Killing Time" for royalty, top government men/professional and businessmen/food rations cut—widespread hunger

October 1975	Angka's private communique: former military & government leader are expendable after fall harvests
January 1976	Communique: 1 million men…are enough. Prisoners of war (those expelled from cities)….dispose of as (you) please.
July 1976	Wet Monsoon "Killing Time" for lesser military and government men, and the educated and skilled
July 1977	Wet Monsoon "Killing Time" for families of men already killed
July 1978	Wet Monsoon "Killing Time" for anyone from previous groups who had been missed, plus any who might threaten regime, e.g. Vietnamese-Cambodians
Fall 1978	Khmer Rouge war with Vietnam intensifies/repressive measures increase/many killed or moved
January 7, 1979	Vietnam "liberates" Cambodia

APPENDIX C

Itinerary of Research Trip to Cambodia May 2008

APPENDIX D
Agenda of conference attended in Cambodia, March 14-15, 2008

Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) International Conference
Wat Damnak, Siem Reap
March 14-15, 2008

Mainland Southeast Asia at its Margins:
Minority Groups and Borders

Agenda

Friday March 14, 2008

Time	Title	Speakers
7:00-8:00	Registration	
8:00-8:15	Opening Remarks	**Dr. Philippe Peycam** (CKS Director) **Mr. Chean R. Men** (CKS)
8:15-8:45	Keynote Address: A Collision of Worldviews: The ADB's Construction of Indigenous Peoples in Cambodia	**Dr. Peter Hammer**, (Wayne State University, USA)
8:45-9:00	**Coffee break**	
Theme One: Social Exclusion (Chair: Prof. Stephen L. Keck)		
9:00-9:30	The Social Exclusion of Children with Disabilities in Cambodia	**Dr. Maya Kalyanpur** (Dept of Special Education, Towson University, USA) **Mr. Hun Touch, Mr. Un Siren & Mr Jan Berkvens** (Rabbit School, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
9:30-10:00	'The Important Forgotten - Men Living in Rural Indonesia Who Have Sex With Men: The Implications for HIV Education	**Mr. Waryono** and **Dr. Ed Green** (Universitas Gadjah Mada - Yogyakart Indonesia)
10:00-10:30	Campaign of Ignorance – Marginalization of Myanmar's Non-Elite Population	**Dr. Steven B. Shirley** (Troy University – South Korea Kathy Thaw, Webster University – Thailand)
10:30-11:00	Women, pregnancy and health: Case studies among the Bunong in Mondulkiri, Cambodia	**Brigitte Nikles** (Social Anthropologist Nomad RSI Cambodia)
11:00-11:30	A Landscape of Endless Boundaries: Marginality, Dignity, and the Rights of Persons with Intellectual and Physical Disabilities in	**Dr. Darren C. Zook** (Department of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley, USA)

	Cambodia and Mainland Southeast Asia	
11:30-12:00	Living in the Margins. From inclusion to exclusion: Prevailing social dynamics in Ratanakiri among ethnic minorities	**Dr. Frédéric Bourdier** (Institut de recherche pour le développement, IRD)

12:00-1:30 Lunch

Theme Two: Indigenous Persons (Chair: Prof. Robert Winzeler)

1:30-2:00	Ethnic Transformation of Indigenous People in Non-IP Territory: The Case of Bajaus in Batangas City, Philippines	**Marlon de Luna Era** (Behavioral Sciences Department, De La Salle University-Manila, Philippines)
2:00-2:30	Religious Conversion on the Ethnic Margins of Mainland Southeast Asia	**Prof. Robert L. Winzeler** (University of Nevada, Reno, NV, USA)
2:30-3:00	Changes in genders' roles and women's status among Indigenous communities in Cambodia's North East facing land alienation and massive immigration and Six-Part Documentary Series: Voice of Women from Ethnic Minority Groups.	**Dr. Margherita Maffii** (University of Milan, Italy) and **Tive Sarayeth** (WMC Executive Director of Women Media Center, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
3:00-3:30	Illegal border crossing issue of Montagnards from Vietnam's Central Highlands to Cambodia through newspaper articles	**Dr. SHINE Toshihiko** (Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa., Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan)

3:30-4:00 Coffee break

Theme Three: Migrant Labor and Workers (Chair: Dr. Darren Zook)

4:00-4:30	The Poverty Trap on the Border Land (A Case Study of the Poor Migrant across the West Kalimantan – Sarawak Border	**Dr. Tulus Warsito** and **Dr. Wahyuni Kartikasari** (Dept of International Relations Univ. MuKammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia)
4:30-5:00	Bangladeshi in Arakan and Arakanese in Bangladesh:Two minority ethnic groups and their migrations in both directions	**Marion Sabrie** (University Paris IV-L Sorbonne -Paris-France)
5:00-5:30	Improving Conditions for Sectoral Migration Of Cambodians to Thailand: Legislation, Monitoring and Awareness	**Sary Seng** (Lecturer at Mean Chey University, Cambodia)

6:30 Evening Cocktail at FCC

Saturday March 15, 2008

Theme Four: Development, Change and Ethnicity (Chair: Dr. Ian Baird)

8:00-8:30	Deforestations and their impacts on community lives of the ethnic minorities in Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri: Challenge and Consequences	**Heng Sreang** *(*Department of Philosophy Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia)
8:30-9:00	Economic Growth and Human Security of Indigenous Peoples along GMS Economic Corridors	**Dr. Kosum Saichan** (Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, Chiang Mai University Thailand)
9:00-9:30	Development - in whose name? Cambodia's Economic Development and the Chances of Achieving the Cambodian MDGs in 2 Indigenous Communities in a Remote Province	**Jeremy Ironside**

9:30-10:00 Coffee Break

Theme Five: Constructing Identities: Selves, Groups and Nations (Chair: Dr. Frédéric Bourdier)

10:00-10:30	Re-configuration of Ethnic Representation in Post-War Society: Who are the *Chen* in post-Socialist Rural Cambodia?	**Dr. Satoru Kobayashi** (Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan)
10:30-11:00	The Cham Muslims of Cambodia: Defining Islam Today and the Validity of the Discourse of Syncretism	**Allen Stoddard** (Harvard University, USA)
11:00-11:30	Towards Liberal Multiculturalism? Minorities, the State and the International Community in Cambodia	**Stefan Ehrentraut (**Center for Advanced Study/ Potsdam University, Germany)
11:30-12:00	Ethnic Groups in Contemporary Cambodia	**Dr. Hean Sokhom** (Center for Advanced Study, Cambodia)
12:00-12:30	Spaces of Resistance: The Ethnic Brao People and the International Border Between Laos and Cambodia	**Dr. Ian G. Baird**, Geography Department, University of British Columbia, Canada

12:30-2:00 Lunch

2:00-2:30	The Invisible Minority: Muslims in Colonial Burma	**Stephen L. Keck** (Department of International Studies, American University of Sharjah)
2:30-3:00	Negotiation and Reproduction of Identity	**Omsin Boonlert** (Department of

	Among Displaced People	Sociology and Anthropology, University, Chiang Mai Thailand)
3:00-3:30	The ethnic process of Chinese people from *Hai Ninh* in Dong Nai	**Dr. Tran Hong Lien** (Southern Institute of Social Sciences, HCMC-Vietnam)

3:30-4:00 Coffee break

Theme Six: Cultural Mapping (Chair: Marlon de Luna Era)

4:00-4:30	Cultural Mapping: Intangible values and engaging with communities	**Prof. Ken Taylor** (Research School of Humanities, The Australian National University, NSW)
4:30-5:00	Taking the lid off the cooker.	**Prof. Ian Cook**, Research School of Humanities, The Australian National University**,** NSW)

Closing Remarks

Conference Organizing Committee:
Chean R. Men & Dr. Peter Hammer

APPENDIX E

Photographs of Sam Por Mountain in Battambang

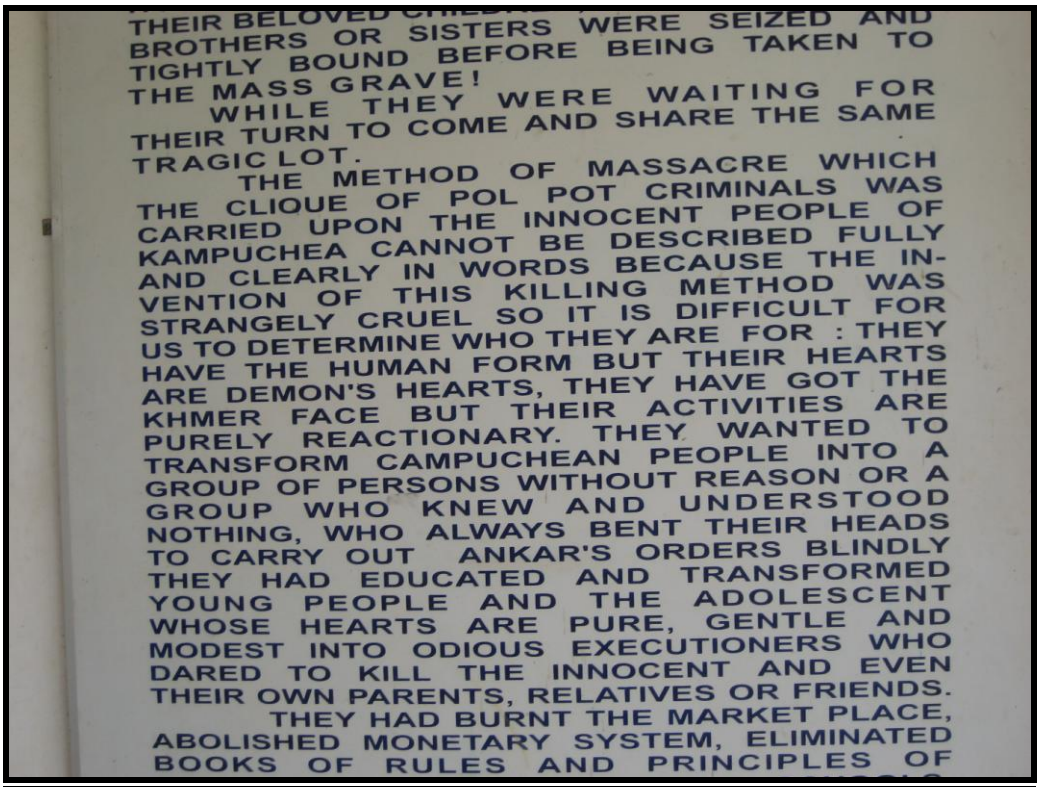
Where hundreds of thousands of people were beaten and then pushed into deep caves to die

Looking up from bottom of cave to opening to sky

Skull and bones to commemorate mass grave

Photographs from Cheong Ek Genocidal Center Phnom Penh

Skulls



Description of massacre